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# THE KABBALAH

ITS DOCTRINES, DEVELOPMENT, AND LITERATURE

By

CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG L.I.D.

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TO

PERCY M. DOVE, ESQ., F.I.A., F.S.S., &c.,

I AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBE THIS ESSAY,

AS AN EXPRESSION OF MY HIGH REGARD FOR HIM, BOTH  
AS A FRIEND AND A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG.



## THE KABBALAH.

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### I.

A SYSTEM of religious philosophy, or more properly of theosophy, which has not only exercised for hundreds of years an extraordinary influence on the mental development of so shrewd a people as the Jews, but has captivated the minds of some of the greatest thinkers of Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, claims the greatest attention of both the philosopher and the theologian. When it is added that among its captives were Raymond Lully, the celebrated scholastic, metaphysician and chemist (died 1315); John Reuchlin, the renowned scholar and reviver of oriental literature in Europe (born 1455, died 1522); John Picus di Mirandola, the famous philosopher and classical scholar (1463-1494); Cornelius Henry Agrippa, the distinguished philosopher, divine and physician (1486-1535); John Baptist von Helmont, a remarkable chemist and physician (1577-1644); as well as our own countrymen Robert Fludd, the famous physician and philosopher (1574-1637), and Dr. Henry More (1614-1687); and that these men, after restlessly searching for a scientific system which should disclose to them "the deepest depths" of the Divine nature, and show them the real tie which binds all things together, found the cravings of their minds satisfied by this theosophy, the claims of the Kabbalah on the attention of students in literature and philosophy will readily be admitted. The claims of the Kabbalah, however, are not restricted to the literary

man and the philosopher : the poet too will find in it ample materials for the exercise of his lofty genius. How can it be otherwise with a theosophy which, we are assured, was born of God in Paradise, was nursed and reared by the choicest of the angelic hosts in heaven, and only held converse with the holiest of man's children upon earth. Listen to the story of its birth, growth and maturity, as told by its followers.

The Kabbalah was first taught by God himself to a select company of angels, who formed a theosophic school in Paradise. After the fall the angels most graciously communicated this heavenly doctrine to the disobedient child of earth, to furnish the protoplasts with the means of returning to their pristine nobility and felicity. From Adam it passed over to Noah, and then to Abraham, the friend of God, who emigrated with it to Egypt, where the patriarch allowed a portion of this mysterious doctrine to ooze out. It was in this way that the Egyptians obtained some knowledge of it, and the other Eastern nations could introduce it into their philosophical systems. Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, was first initiated into it in the land of his birth, but became most proficient in it during his wanderings in the wilderness, when he not only devoted to it the leisure hours of the whole forty years, but received lessons in it from one of the angels. By the aid of this mysterious science the lawgiver was enabled to solve the difficulties which arose during his management of the Israelites, in spite of the pilgrimages, wars and the frequent miseries of the nation. He covertly laid down the principles of this secret doctrine in the first four books of the Pentateuch, but withheld them from Deuteronomy. This constitutes the former the man, and the latter the woman. Moses also initiated the seventy elders into the secrets of this doctrine, and they again transmitted them from hand to hand. Of all who formed the



unbroken line of tradition, David and Solomon were most initiated into the Kabbalah. No one, however, dared to write it down, till Simon ben Jochai, who lived at the time of the destruction of the second Temple. Having been condemned to death by Titus, Rabbi Simon managed to escape with his son and concealed himself in a cavern where he remained for twelve years. Here, in this subterranean abode, he occupied himself entirely with the contemplation of the sublime Kabbalah, and was constantly visited by the Prophet Elias, who disclosed to him some of its secrets which were still concealed from the theosophical Rabbi. Here, too, his disciples resorted to be initiated by their master into these divine mysteries; and here, Simon ben Jochai expired with this heavenly doctrine in his mouth, whilst discoursing on it to his disciples. Scarcely had his spirit departed, when a dazzling light filled the cavern, so that no one could look at the Rabbi; whilst a burning fire appeared outside, forming as it were a sentinel at the entrance of the cave, and denying admittance to the neighbours. It was not till the light inside, and the fire outside, had disappeared, that the disciples perceived that the lamp of Israel was extinguished. As they were preparing for his obsequies, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "Come ye to the marriage of Simon b. Jochai, he is entering into peace, and shall rest in his chamber!" A flame preceded the coffin, which seemed enveloped by, and burning like fire. And when the remains were deposited in the tomb, another voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is he who caused the earth to quake, and the kingdoms to shake!" His son, R. Eliezer, and his secretary, R. Abba, as well as his disciples, then collated R. Simon b. Jochai's treatises, and out of these composed the celebrated work called *Sohar* (זוהר) i.e., *Splendour*, which is the grand store-house of Kabbalism.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the followers

of this secret doctrine claim for it a pre-Adamite existence, and maintain that, ever since the creation of the first man, it has been received uninterruptedly from the hands of the patriarchs, the prophets, &c. It is for this reason that it is called *Kabbalah* (קבלה from קבל *to receive*) which primarily denotes *reception*, and then *a doctrine received by oral tradition*. The Kabbalah is also called by some *Secret Wisdom* (חכמה נסתרה), because it was only handed down by tradition through the initiated, and is indicated in the Hebrew Scriptures by signs which are hidden and unintelligible to those who have not been instructed in its mysteries. From the initial letters of this name, this theosophic system is also denominated *Grace* (ח"ן=חכמה נסתרה). Vague and indefinite as this name may seem to the uninitiated, inasmuch as it conveys no idea whatever of the peculiar doctrines of the system, but simply indicates the manner in which they have been transmitted, it is nevertheless the classical and acknowledged appellation of this theosophy. The difference between the word *Kabbalah* (קבלה *receptio*) and the cognate term *Massorah* (מסורה *traditio*, from מסר *to transmit*)—which denotes *the traditionally-transmitted* various readings of the Hebrew Scriptures—is, that the former expresses *the act of receiving*, which in this technical sense could only be on the part of one who has reached a certain period of life, as well as a certain state of sanctity, implying also a degree of secrecy; whilst the latter signifies *the act of giving over, surrendering*, without premising any peculiar age, stage of holiness, or degree of secrecy. The name, therefore, tells us no more than that this theosophy has been received traditionally. To ascertain its tenets we must analyze the system itself or the books which propound it; and to this task we now betake ourselves.

The cardinal doctrines of the Kabbalah are mainly designed to solve the grand problems about (I) The nature of the



Supreme Being, (II) The cosmogony, (III) The creation of angels and man, (IV) The destiny of man and the universe, and (V) To point out the import of the Revealed Law. Assenting and consenting to the declarations of the Hebrew Scriptures about the unity of God (Exod. xx, 3; Deut. iv, 35, 39; vi, 4; xxxii, 39), his incorporeity (Exod. xx, 4; Deut. iv, 15; Ps. xiv, 18), eternity (Exod. iii, 14; Deut. xxxii, 40; Isa. xli, 4; xliii, 10; xlv, 6; xlviii, 12), immutability (Mal. iii, 6), perfection (Deut. xxxii, 1; 2 Sam. xxii, 31; Job xxxviii, 16; Ps. xviii, 31), infinite goodness (Exod. xxxiv, 6; Ps. xxv, 10; xxxiii, 5; c, 5; cxlv, 9), the creation of the world in time according to God's free will (Gen. i, 1), the moral government of the universe and special providence, and to the creation of man in the image of God (Gen. i. 27), the Kabbalah seeks to explain the transition from the infinite to the finite; the procedure of multifariousness from an absolute unity, and of matter from a pure intelligence; the operation of pure intelligence upon matter, in spite of the infinite gulf between them; the relationship of the Creator to the creature, so as to be able to exercise supervision and providence. It, moreover, endeavours to show how it is that the Bible gives names and assigns attributes and a form to so spiritual a Being; how the existence of evil is compatible with the infinite goodness of God, and what is the Divine intention about this creation.

In our analysis of the Kabbalistic doctrines on these grand problems, we shall follow the order in which they have been enumerated, and accordingly begin with the lucubrations on the Supreme Being and the Emanations.

### *I. The Supreme Being and the doctrine and classification of the Emanations, or Sephiroth.*

Being boundless in his nature—which necessarily implies that he is an absolute unity and inscrutable, and that there

is nothing without him, or that the  $\tau\acute{o}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  is in him, <sup>1</sup>—God is called EN SOPH (אֵין סוֹפָה) =  $\alpha\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  *Endless, Boundless*.<sup>2</sup> In this boundlessness, or as *the En Soph*, he cannot be comprehended by the intellect, nor described in words, for there is nothing which can grasp and depict him to us, and as such he is, in a certain sense, not existent (אֵין), because, as far as our minds are concerned, that which is perfectly incomprehensible does not exist.<sup>3</sup> To make his existence perceptible, and to render himself comprehensible, *the En Soph*, or *the Boundless*, had to become active and creative. But *the En Soph* cannot be the direct creator, for he has neither will, intention, desire, thought, language, nor action, as these properties imply limit and belong to finite beings, whereas *the En Soph* is boundless. Besides, the imperfect and circumscribed nature of the creation precludes the idea that the world was created or even designed by him, who can have no will nor produce anything but what is like himself, boundless and

1 דע כי אין סוף לא יכנס בהרהור וכל שכן בדבור ואף על פי שיש לו רמו בכל דבר שאין חוץ  
 Commentary of the ten Sephiroth, ed. Berlin, p. 4 a. This doctrine, however, that everything is in the Deity is not peculiar to the Kabbalah, it has been propounded by the Jews from time immemorial, before the Kabbalah came into existence, as may be seen from the following passage in *the Midrash*. "The Holy One, blessed be he, is the space of the universe, but the universe is not his space (הקב"ה מקומו של עולם ואין חצולת) (מקומו). R. Isaac submitted: from the passage מעונה אלהי קדם (Deut. xxxiii, 27), we do not know whether the Holy One, blessed be he, is the habitation of the universe or the universe his habitation; but from the remark ארני קעון אחה Lord thou art the dwelling place (Ps. xc, 1), it is evident that the Holy One, blessed be he, is the dwelling place of the universe, and not the universe his dwelling place." (*Bereshith Rabba*, § lxviii.) To the same effect is the remark of Philo, "God himself is the space of the universe, for it is he who contains all things." (*De Somniis*, i.) It is for this reason that God is called מקום or המקום =  $\acute{o}\ \tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ , *locus*, and that the Septuagint renders וידאו את אלהי ישראל וגו' (Exod. xxiv, 10), by  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\nu\ \tau\acute{o}\nu\ \tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\nu$ ,  $\omicron\acute{\iota}\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\kappa\epsilon\iota\ \acute{o}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , which has occasioned so much difficulty to interpreters.

2 לא ידע ולא אחידע מה דהוי בראישא דא דלא' אחרבק בחכמתא ולא כסוכלחנו ובגן כן  
 (Sohar iii, 283 b.) To the same effect is the ancient expository work on the doctrine of the Emanations which we quoted in the preceding note, comp. מה שאינו מובל קרוי אין סוף והוא: ההשואה גמורה באחדות השלמה שאין בה שנוי ואם  
 הוא מבלי גבול אין חוץ ממנו, Commentary on the ten Sephiroth, ed. Berlin, p. 2 a.

3 דע כי אין סוף אין לו רצון ולא כונה ולא חפץ ולא מחשבה ולא דבור ומעשה  
*ibid.*, 4 a.

perfect. On the other hand, again, the beautiful design displayed in the mechanism, the regular order manifested in the preservation, destruction, and renewal of things, forbid us to regard this world as the offspring of chance, and constrain us to recognize therein an intelligent design.<sup>4</sup> We are, therefore, compelled to view *the En Soph* as the creator of the world in *an indirect manner*.

Now, *the medium* by which *the En Soph* made his existence known in the creation of the world are ten *Sephiroth*<sup>5</sup> (ספירות) or *intelligences*, which emanated from the Boundless One (אין סוף) in the following manner:—At first *the En Soph*, or *the Aged of the Aged* (עתיקא דעתיקין) or *the Holy Aged* (עתיקא קדישא), as he is alternately called, sent forth from his infinite light one spiritual substance or intelligence. This first *Sephira*, which existed in *the En Soph* from all eternity, and became a reality by a mere act, has no less than seven appellations. It is called—I, *the Crown* (כתר), because it occupies the highest position ; II, *the Aged* (עתיקא), because it is the oldest or the first emanation—and this name must not be confounded with *the Aged of the Aged*, which, as we have seen, is the appellation of *the En Soph* ; III, *the Primordial Point* (נקודה ראשונה), or *the Smooth Point* (נקודה פשוטה), because, as the *Sohar* tells us, “ When the Concealed of the Concealed wished to reveal himself, he first made a single

4 אם תאמר כי הוא בלבד כיון בבריאת עולמו יש להשיב על זה כי הכונה מורה על הסרון  
אם תאמר שהנבול הנמצא ממנו תחלה היה העולם הזה שהוא (העולם) חסר מהשלמותו  
חסרת הכוח שהוא ממנו . . . ואם תאמר שלא כיון בבריאתו אם כן היתה הבריאה במקרה,  
וכל דבר הנא במקרה אין לו סדר, ואנו רואים כי הנבראים יש לחם סדר, ועל סדר הם מתקיימים,  
*ibid.*, p. 2. ועל סדר הם מתבטלים, ועל סדר הם מתחדשים

5 Both the etymology and the exact meaning of the word ספירה (plural ספירות) are matters of dispute. R. Azariel, the first Kabbalist, derives it from ספר *to number*, whilst the later Kabbalists derive it alternately from ספיר *Saphir*, from השמים מספרים כבוד אל (Ps. xix, 1), and from the Greek σφαῖραι, and are not at all certain whether to regard *the Sephiroth* as *principles* (ἀρχαί), or as *substances* (ὑποστάσεις), or as *potencies, powers* (δυνάμεις), or as *intelligent worlds* (κόσμοι νοητικοί), or as *attributes*, or as *entities* (עצמות), or as *organs of the Deity* (גלים).



point: the Infinite was entirely unknown, and diffused no light before this luminous point violently broke through into vision;" (*Sohar*, i, 15 a). IV, *the White Head* (רישא הוורה); V, *the Long Face, Macroprosopon* (אריך אנפין), because the whole ten *Sephiroth* represent the Primordial or the Heavenly Man (אדם עלאה), of which the first *Sephira* is the head; VI, *The Inscrutable Height* (רום מעלה), because it is the highest of all the *Sephiroth* proceeding immediately from *the En Soph*. Hence, on the passage "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold the King of Peace<sup>6</sup> with the Crown!" (*Song of Solomon* iii, 2) the *Sohar* remarks, "But who can behold the King of Peace, seeing that He is incomprehensible, even to the heavenly hosts? But he who sees the Crown sees the glory of the King of Peace." (*Sohar* ii. 100 b.) And, VII, it is expressed in the Bible by the Divine name *Ehejeh*, or *I Am* (אהיה *Exod.* iii, 4), because it is absolute being, representing the Infinite as distinguished from the finite, and in the angelic order, by the celestial beasts of *Ezekiel*, called *Chajoth* (חיות). The first *Sephira* contained the other nine *Sephiroth*, and gave rise to them in the following order:—At first a masculine or active potency, designated *Wisdom* (חכמה), proceeded from it. This *Sephira*, which among the divine names is represented by *Jah* (יה *Isa.* xxvi, 4), and among the angelic hosts by *Ophanim* (אפנים *Wheels*), sent forth an opposite, *i. e.* a feminine or passive, potency, denominated *Intelligence* (בינה), which is represented by the divine name *Jehovah* (יהוה), and angelic name *Arelim* (אראלים), and it is from a union of these two *Sephiroth*, which are also called *Father* (אבא) and *Mother* (אמא), that the remaining seven *Sephiroth* proceeded. Or, as the *Sohar* (iii, 290 a) expresses it, "When the Holy Aged,

<sup>6</sup> The *Sohar*, like the Talmud, generally renders the words מלך שלמה *King Solomon*; while verses in the *Song of Songs*, by מלכא די שלמא דיליה *the King to whom peace belongs*.

the Concealed of all Concealed, assumed a form, he produced everything in the form of male and female, as the things could not continue in any other form. Hence Wisdom, which is the beginning of development, when it proceeded from the Holy Aged, emanated in male and female, for Wisdom expanded, and Intelligence proceeded from it, and thus obtained male and female—viz., Wisdom, the father, and Intelligence, the mother, from whose union the other pairs of *Sephiroth* successively emanated." These two opposite potencies—viz., Wisdom (הכמה) and Intelligence (בינה)—are joined together by the first potency, the Crown (כתר); thus yielding the first triad of the *Sephiroth*.

From the junction of the foregoing opposites emanated again the masculine or active potency, denominated *Mercy* or *Love*, (חסד), also called *Greatness* (גדולה), the fourth *Sephira*, which among the divine names is represented by *El* (אל), and among the angelic hosts by *Chashma'im* (חשמלים, Comp. Ezek. i, 4). From this again emanated the feminine or passive potency, *Justice* (דין), also called *Judicial Power* (גבורה), the fifth *Sephira*, which is represented by the divine name *Eloha* (אלה), and among the angels by *Seraphim* (שרפים, Isa. vi, 6); and from this again the uniting potency, *Beauty* or *Mildness* (תפארת), the sixth *Sephira*, represented by the divine name *Elohim* (אלהים), and among the angels by *Shinanim* (שנאנים, Ps. lxviii, 18). Since without this union the existence of things would not be possible, inasmuch as mercy not tempered with justice, and justice not tempered with mercy would be unendurable: and thus the second trinity of the *Sephiroth* is obtained.

The medium of union of the second trinity, *i. e.* *Beauty* (תפארת), the sixth *Sephira*, beamed forth the masculine or active potency, *Firmness* (נצח), the seventh *Sephira*, corresponding to the divine name *Jehovah Sabaoth* (יהוה צבאות), and among the angels to *Tarshishim* (תרשישים, Dan. x. 6);

this again gave rise to the feminine or passive potency, *Splendour* (הוד), the eighth *Sephira*, to which answer the divine name *Elohim Sabaoth* (אלהים צבאות), and among the angels *Benei Elohim* (בני אלהים, Gen. vi. 4); and from it again, emanated *Foundation* or *the Basis* (יסוד), the ninth *Sephira*, represented by the divine name *El Chai* (אל חי), and among the angelic hosts by *Ishim* (אשים, Ps. civ. 4), which is the uniting point between these two opposites—thus yielding the third trinity of *Sephiroth*. From the ninth *Sephira*, *the Basis* (יסוד) of all, emanated the tenth, called *Kingdom* (מלכות), and *Shechinah* (שכינה), which is represented by the divine name *Adonai* (אדוני), and among the angelic hosts by *Cherubim* (כרובים). The table on the opposite page exhibits the different names of the *Sephiroth*, together with the several names of God and the angels, which correspond to them.

From this representation of each triad, as consisting of a threefold principle, viz., the two opposites, masculine and feminine, and the uniting principle, the development of the *Sephiroth*, and of life generally, is symbolically called *the Balance* (מתקלא), because the two opposite sexes, are compared with the two opposite scales, and the uniting *Sephira* is compared with the beam which joins the scales, and indicates its equipoise.

Before we enter into further particulars about the nature, operation, and classification of these *Sephiroth*, we shall give the *Sohar's* speculations about the Supreme Being, and its account of the origin of the *Sephiroth*, and their relationship to the Deity.

The prophet Elias having learned in the heavenly college the profound mystery and true import of the words in Isa. xl, 25, 26, "To whom will ye liken me, and shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who (מי) hath created these things (אלה)," revealed to R. Simon b. Jochai that God in his absolute nature is unknown



THE TEN SEPHIROTH.	THE TEN CORRESPONDING NAMES OF THE DEITY.	THE TEN CORRESPONDING CLASSES OF ANGELS.	THE TEN CORRESPONDING MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN BODY.
<p>1. כתר, CROWN.</p> <p>2. עֲתִיקָה, THE AGED.</p> <p>3. נִקְוָה רִאשׁוֹנָה, PRIMORDIAL POINT.</p> <p>4. נִקְוָה שְׁמוֹנֶה, SMOOTH POINT.</p> <p>i. { 5. רִישׁ הַהוּרָה, WHITE HEAD.</p> <p>6. אֵרֶץ אֲנֶפֶן, MACROPROPON.</p> <p>7. אִדָּם עִלְיָה, HEAVENLY MAN.  </p> <p>8. רֹאשׁ מַעֲלָה, INSCRUTABLE HEIGHT.</p> <p>ii. חֲכָמָה, σοφία, WISDOM.</p> <p>iii. בִּינָה, νῦν, INTELLIGENCE.</p> <p>iv. { 1. חֶסֶד, χαρις, LOVE.</p> <p>2. גְּדֻלָּה, GREATNESS.</p> <p>v. { 1. דִּין, JUDGMENT.</p> <p>2. מִשְׁפָּט, JUSTICE.</p> <p>3. גְּבוּרָה, STRENGTH.]</p> <p>vi. תְּשׁוּבָה, BEAUTY.</p> <p>vii. נְצַח, FIRMNESS.</p> <p>viii. הוֹר, SPLENDOUR.</p> <p>ix. יְסֹד, FOUNDATION.</p> <p>x. { 1. מַלְכוּת, βασιλεία sc. τῶν οὐρανῶν, KINGDOM.</p> <p>2. שְׁכִינָה, SHECHINAH.</p>	<p>אֲדָמָה, I AM (Exod. iii. 4).</p> <p>יְהוָה, JAH (Isa. xxvi. 4).</p> <p>יְהוָה, JEHOVAH.</p> <p>אֵל, THE MIGHTY ONE.</p> <p>אֵלֹהִים, THE ALMIGHTY.</p> <p>אֱלֹהִים, GOD.</p> <p>יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, JEHOVAH SABAOOTH.</p> <p>אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת, GOD SARAOOTH.</p> <p>אֵל הַיּוֹם, MIGHTY LIVING ONE.</p> <p>אֲדָמָה, THE LORD.</p>	<p>זִיּוֹת, ζῶν.</p> <p>מוֹשֶׁמֶת, מוֹשֶׁמֶת.</p> <p>אֲרִאִלִּים, ARELIM (Isa. xxxiii. 7).</p> <p>חַשְׁתָּרִאִלִּים, CHASHERALIM (Ezek. i. 4).</p> <p>שֶׁרָפִידִים, SERAPHIM (Isa. vi. 7).</p> <p>שִׁינַנִּים, SHINANIM (Ps. lxxviii. 18).</p> <p>תַּרְשִׁישִׁים, TARSHISHIM (Dan. x. 6).</p> <p>בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, THE SONS OF GOD (Gen. vi. 4).</p> <p>אִשִּׁים, ISHIM (Ps. civ. 4).</p> <p>כִּרְוָבִים, CHERUBIM.</p>	<p>HEAD.</p> <p>BRAINS.</p> <p>HEART.</p> <p>RIGHT ARM.</p> <p>LEFT ARM.</p> <p>CHEST.</p> <p>RIGHT LEG.</p> <p>LEFT LEG.</p> <p>GENITAL ORGANS.</p> <p>UNION OF THE WHOLE BODY.</p>

and incomprehensible, and hence, in a certain sense, non-existent; that this *Who* (אלה *unknown subject*) had to become active and creative, to demonstrate his existence, and that it is only by these (אלה) works of creation that he made himself known to us. It is therefore the combination of the unknown *Who* (מי) with *these visible* (אלה) works that showed him to be God (אלהים) which is produced by מ transposed, *i. e.* ים, and united with אלה). Or, as it is in the language of the Kabbalah;—

“Before he gave any shape to this world, before he produced any form, he was alone, without a form and resemblance to anything else. Who then can comprehend him how he was before the creation, since he was formless? Hence it is forbidden to represent him by any form, similitude, or even by his sacred name, by a single letter or a single point; and to this the words ‘Ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you’ (Deut. iv, 15)—*i.e.* ye have not seen anything which you could represent by any form or likeness—refer. But after he created the form of *the Heavenly Man* (אדם עלאה), he used it as a chariot (מרכבה) wherein to descend, and wishes to be called by this form, which is the sacred name Jehovah. He wishes to be known by his attributes, and each attribute separately; and therefore had himself called the God of Mercy, the God of Justice, Almighty, God of Sabaoth, and the Being. He wishes thereby to make known his nature, and that we should see how his mercy and compassion extend both to the world and to all operations. For if he had not poured out his light upon all his creatures, how could we ever have known him? How could the words be fulfilled, ‘The whole earth is full of his glory’ (Isa. vi, 3)? Woe be to him who compares him with his own attributes! or still worse with the son of man whose foundation is in the dust, who vanishes and is no more! Hence, the form in which we delineate him simply describes



each time his dominion over a certain attribute, or over the creatures generally. We cannot understand more of his nature than the attribute expresses. Hence, when he is divested of all these things, he has neither any attribute nor any similitude or form. The form in which he is generally depicted is to be compared to a very expansive sea; for the waters of the sea are in themselves without a limit or form, and it is only when they spread themselves upon the earth that they assume a form (דמיון). We can now make the following calculation: the *source* of the sea's water and the *water stream* proceeding therefrom to spread itself are *two*. A great reservoir is then formed, just as if a huge hollow had been dug; this reservoir is called sea, and is *the third*. The unfathomable deep divides itself into *seven streams*, resembling seven long vessels. The source, the water stream, the sea and the seven streams make together *ten*. And when the master breaks the vessels which he has made, the waters return to the source, and then only remain the pieces of these vessels, dried up and without any water. It is in this way that the Cause of Causes gave rise to the *ten Sephiroth*. The Crown is the source from which streams forth an infinite light: hence the name *En Soph* (אין סוף) = *infinite*, by which the highest cause is designated: for it then had neither form nor shape, and there is neither any means whereby to comprehend it, nor a way by which to know it. Hence it is written, 'Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength.' (Ecclus. iii, 21.) He then made a vessel, as small as a point, like the letter 'י', which is filled from this source (*i.e.* the *En Soph*). This is the source of wisdom, *wisdom itself* (חכמה), after which the Supreme Cause is called '*wise God*.' Upon this he made a large vessel like a sea, which is called *Intelligence* (בינה): hence the name '*intelligent God*.' It must, however, be remarked that God is wise, and through himself, for

wisdom does not derive its name through itself, but through the wise one who fills it with the light which flows from him, just as intelligence is not comprehended through itself, but through him who is intelligent and fills it with his own substance. God needs only to withdraw himself and it would be dried up. This is also the meaning of the words, 'the waters have disappeared from the sea, and the bed is dry and parched up.' (Job xiv, 11.) The sea is finally divided into seven streams, and the seven costly vessels are produced, which are called *Greatness* (גְּדוּלָה), *Judicial Strength* (גְּבוּרָה), *Beauty* (תְּפָאֶרֶת), *Firmness* (נִצְחָה), *Splendour* (דְּיוֹד), *Foundation* (יְסוֹד), and *Kingdom* (מַלְכוּת). Therefore is he called the Great or the Merciful, the Mighty, the Glorious, the God of victory, the Creator, to whom all praise is due, and the Foundation of all things. Upon the last attribute all the others are based as well as the world. Finally, he is also the King of the universe, for everything is in his power; he can diminish the number of the vessels, and increase in them the light which streams from them, or reduce it, just as it pleases him." (*Sohar*, i, 42 b, 43 a, section בֵּא.)

In another place again the same authority gives the following description of the Deity and the emanation of the *Sephiroth*. "The Aged of the Aged, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a form and yet has no form. He has a form whereby the universe is preserved, and yet has no form, because he cannot be comprehended. When he first assumed the form [of the first *Sephira*], he caused nine splendid lights to emanate from it, which, shining through it, diffused a bright light in all directions. Imagine an elevated light sending forth its rays in all directions. Now if we approach it to examine the rays, we understand no more than that they emanate from the said light. So is the Holy Aged an absolute light, but in himself concealed and incomprehensible. We can only comprehend him through those luminous emanations (סְפִירוֹת) which



again are partly visible and partly concealed. These constitute the sacred name of God." (*Idra Suta, Sohar*, iii, 288 a.)

Four things must be borne in mind with regard to the *Sephiroth*. I. That they were not created by, but emanated (נאצל) from, *the En Soph*; the difference between creation and emanation being, that in the former a diminution of strength takes place, whilst in the latter this is not the case.<sup>7</sup> II. That they form among themselves, and with *the En Soph*, a strict unity, and simply represent different aspects of one and the same being, just as the different rays which proceed from the light, and which appear different things to the eye, form only different manifestations of one and the same light. III. That since they simply differ from each other as the different colours of the same light, all the ten emanations alike partake of the perfections of *the En Soph*; and IV, that, as emanations from the Infinite, the *Sephiroth* are infinite and perfect like *the En Soph*, and yet constitute the first finite things.<sup>8</sup> They are infinite and perfect when *the En Soph* imparts his fulness to them, and finite and imperfect when the fulness is withdrawn from them, so that in this respect these ten *Sephiroth* exactly correspond to the double nature of Christ,—his finite and imperfect human nature and his infinite and perfect divine nature.

In their totality and unity these *ten Sephiroth* are not only denominated *the world of Sephiroth* (עולם הספירות) and *the world of Emanations* (עולם אצילות), but represent and are called the *Primordial or Archetypal Man* (אדם קדמון = *πρωτόγονος*), and *the Heavenly Man* (אדם עילאה). In the figure, the Crown (כתר) is *the head*; Wisdom (חכמה), *the brains*; and Intelligence (בינה), which unites the two and

7. כי כל בריאה שנופל מן המעשה והתחבר . . . כח האצילות שנופל מן מנו ואינו חסר, Commentary on the ten Sephiroth, 2 b; 4 a.

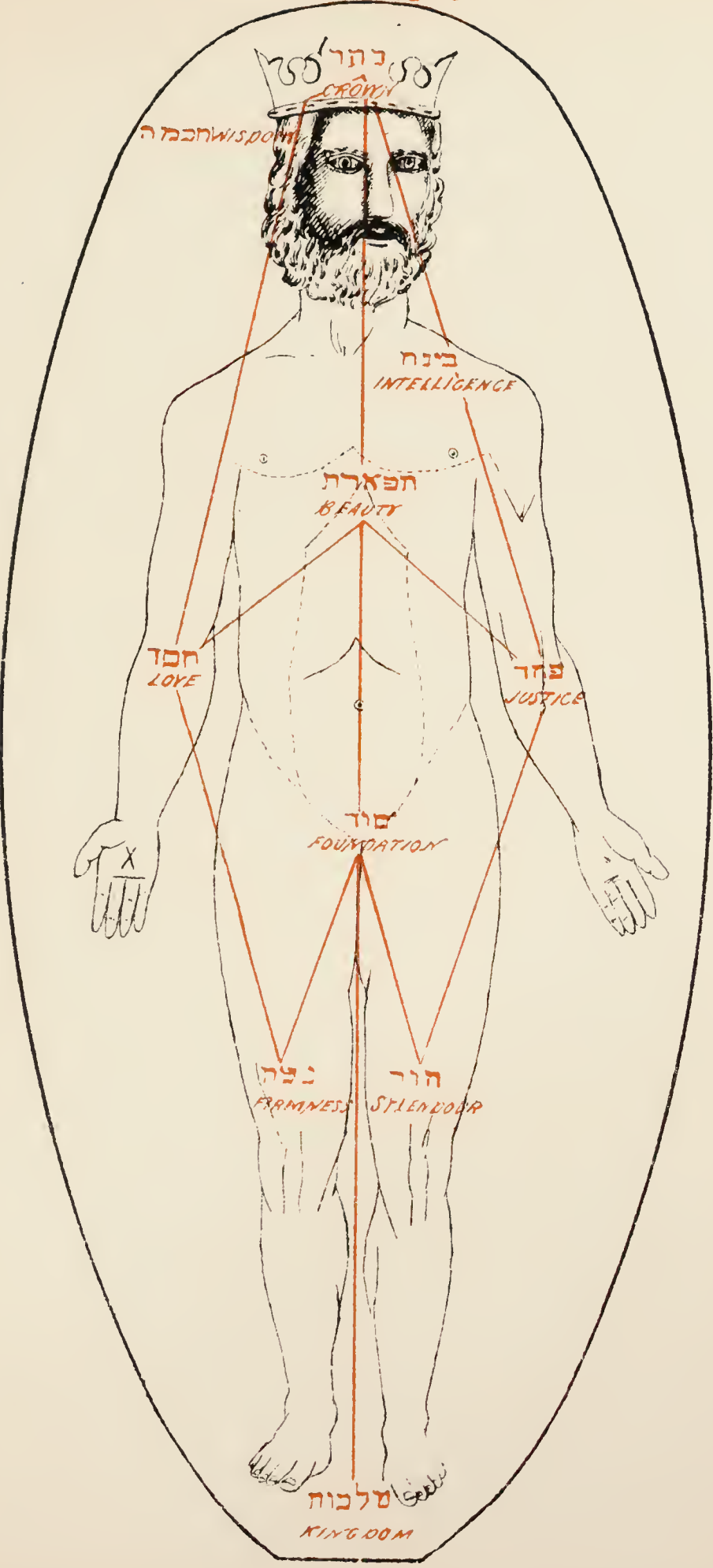
8 הספירות שהם כח השלם וכח החסר נשגב מקבלים מהשפע הבא מהשלמותו הם כח שלם ובהסנע השפע מהם יש בהם כח חסר לכך יש בהם כח לפעול בהשלמה ובהסרון

produces the first triad, is *the heart* or *the understanding*—thus forming *the head*. The fourth and fifth *Sephiroth*, i.e., Mercy (חסד) and Justice (פחד), are the two arms of the Lord, the former the right arm and the latter the left, one distributing life and the other death. And the sixth *Sephira*, Beauty (תפארת), which unites these two opposites and produces the second triad, is *the chest*; whilst the seventh and eighth *Sephiroth*,—i.e., Firmness (נצח) and Splendour (הוד), of the third triad,—are *the two legs*; and Foundation (יסוד), the ninth *Sephira*, represents the *genital organs*, since it denotes the basis and source of all things. Thus it is said “Every thing will return to its origin just as it proceeded from it. All marrow, all sap, and all power are congregated in this spot. Hence all powers which exist originate through the genital organs.” (*Sohar*, iii, 296 a.) Kingdom (מלכות), the tenth *Sephira*, represents the harmony of the whole Archetypal Man. The following is the archetypal figure of the ten *Sephiroth*.

It is this form which the prophet Ezekiel saw in the mysterious chariot, and of which the earthly man is a faint copy. Moreover, these *Sephiroth*, as we have already remarked, created the world and all things therein according to their own archetype or in the likeness and similitude of the *Heavenly Man* or *the World of Emanations*. But, before we propound the Kabbalistic doctrine of the creation of the world, it is necessary to describe a second mode in which the trinity of triads in the *Sephiroth* is represented, and to mention the appellations and offices of the respective triads.

Now in looking at the *Sephiroth* which constitute the first triad, it will be seen that they represent *the intellect*; hence this triad is called *the Intellectual World* (עולם מושכל). The second triad, again, represents *moral qualities*; hence it is designated *the moral or Sensuous World* (עולם מורגש): whilst the third triad represents *power and stability*, and

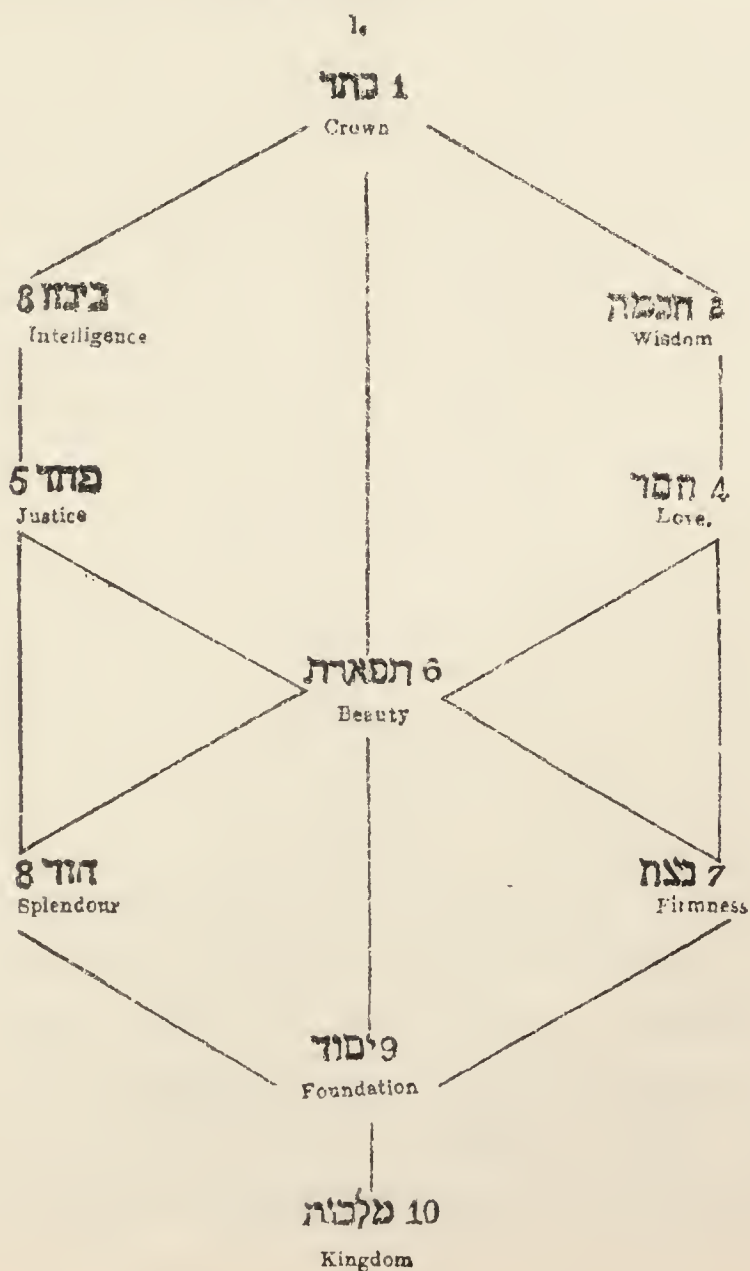
אין סוף  
THE ENDLESS





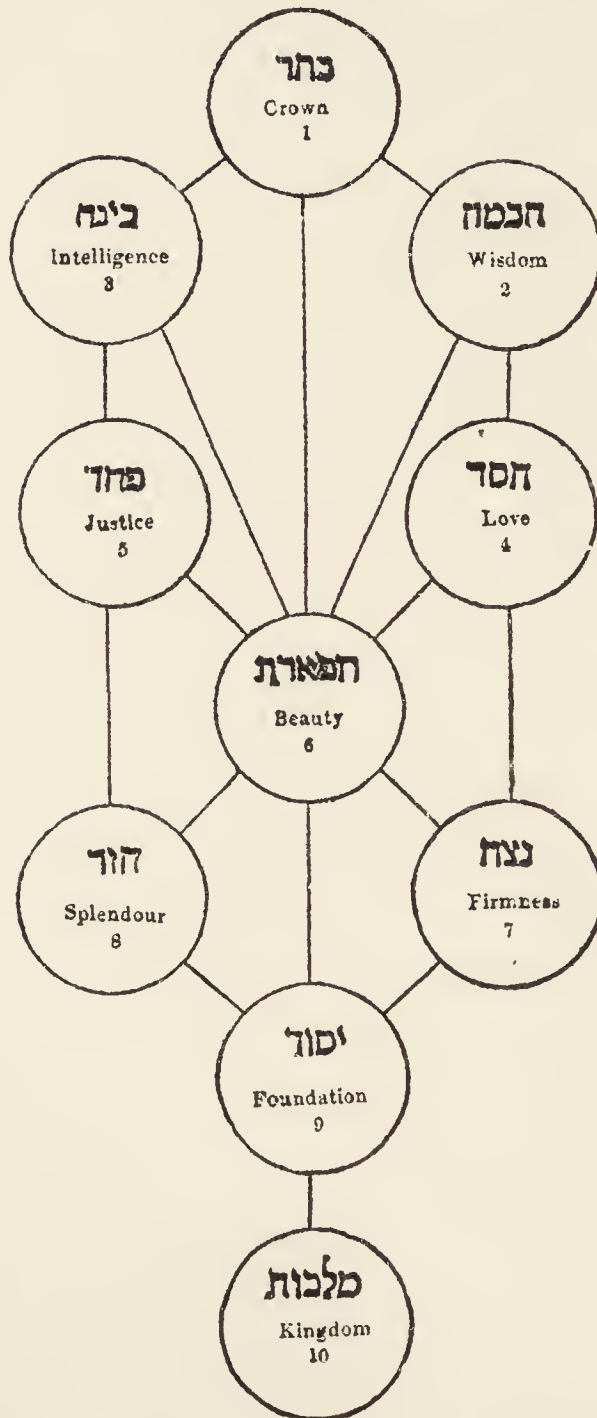


hence is designated *the Material World* (עולם המוטבע). These three aspects in which *the En Soph* manifested himself are called *the Faces* (אנפין and פרצופין = πρόσωπον, the two words are identical, the former being pure Aramaic, and the latter from the Greek). In the arrangement of this trinity of triads, so as to produce what is called the Kabbalistic tree, denominated *the Tree of Life* (עץ חיים), or simply *the Tree* (אילן), the first triad is placed above, the second and third are placed below, in such a manner that the three masculine *Sephiroth* are on the right, the three feminine on the left, whilst the four uniting *Sephiroth* occupy the centre, as shown in the following diagrams:—



## אין סוף

THE ENDLESS.



The three *Sephiroth* on the right, representing the principle of mercy (חסד), are called *the Pillar of Mercy* (סטרא ימינא); the three on the left, representing the principle of rigour (דין), are denominated *the Pillar of Judgment* (סטרא דשמאלא עמודא רדינה); whilst the four *Sephiroth* in the centre, representing mildness (רחמים),



are called *the Middle Pillar* (עמוד ראמצעיתא). Each *Sephira* composing this trinity of triads is, as it were, a trinity in itself. I, It has its own absolute character; II, It receives from above; and III, It communicates to what is below it. Hence the remark, "Just as the Sacred Aged is represented by the number three, so are all the other lights (*Sephiroth*) of a threefold nature." (*Sohar*, iii, 288 b.) Within this trinity in each unit and trinity of triads there is a trinity of units, which must be explained before we can propound the Kabbalistic view of the cosmogony.

We have seen that three of the *Sephiroth* constitute uniting links between three pairs of opposites, and by this means produce three triads, respectively denominated the Intellectual World, the Sensuous or Moral World, and the Material World, and that these three uniting *Sephiroth*, together with the one which unites the whole into a common unity, form what is called *the Middle Pillar* of the Kabbalistic tree. Now from the important position they thus occupy, these *Sephiroth* are synecdochically used to represent the worlds which by their uniting potency they respectively yield. Hence the *Sephira*, CROWN (כתר), from which the *Sephiroth*, WISDOM (חכמה) and INTELLIGENCE (בינה), emanated, and by which they are also united, thus yielding *the Intellectual World*, is by itself used to designate the Intellectual World (עולם המושבע). Its own names, however, are not changed in this capacity, and it still continues to be designated by the several appellations mentioned in the description of the first *Sephira*. The sixth *Sephira*, called BEAUTY (תפארת), which unites *Sephiroth* IV (הסוד, Love) and V (פחד, Justice), thus yielding *the Sensuous World*, is by itself used to denote the Sensuous World, and in this capacity is called *the Sacred King* (מלכא קדישא), or simply *the King* (מלכא); whilst the *Sephira* called KINGDOM (מלכות), which unites the whole *Sephiroth*, is here used to represent the Material World,

instead of the ninth *Sephira*, called FOUNDATION (יסוד), and is in this capacity denominated *the Queen* (מלכתא) or the *Matron* (מטרוניתא). Thus we obtain within the trinity of triads a higher trinity of units,—viz., *the Crown* (כתר), *Beauty* (תפארת), and *Kingdom* (מלכות),—which represents the potencies of all the *Sephiroth*.

## II. *The Creation or the Kabbalistic Cosmogony.*

Having arrived at the highest trinity which comprises all the *Sephiroth*, and which consists of *the Crown, the King, and the Queen*, we shall be able to enter into the cosmogony of the Kabbalah. Now, it is not *the En Soph* who created the world, but this trinity, as represented in the combination of the *Sephiroth*; or rather the creation has arisen from the conjunction of the emanations. The world was born from the union of the crowned King and Queen; or, according to the language of the Kabbalah, these opposite sexes of royalty, who emanated from the *En Soph*, produced the universe in their own image. Worlds, we are told, were indeed created before ever the King and Queen or the *Sephiroth* gave birth to the present state of things, but they could not continue, and necessarily perished, because the *En Soph* had not yet assumed this human form in its completeness, which not only implies a moral and intellectual nature, but, as conditions of development, procreation, and continuance, also comprises sexual opposites. This creation, which aborted and which has been succeeded by the present order of things, is indicated in Gen. xxxvi, 31—40. The kings of Edom, or the old kings as they are also denominated, who are here said to have reigned before the monarchs of Israel, and are mentioned as having died one after the other, are those primordial worlds which were successively convulsed and destroyed; whilst the sovereigns of Israel denote the King and Queen who emanated from the *En Soph*, and who have given birth to and perpetuate the present world. Thus we are told:—



“Before the Aged of the Aged, the Concealed of the Concealed, expanded into the form of King, the Crown of Crowns [*i.e.* the first *Sephira*], there was neither beginning nor end. He hewed and incised forms and figures into it [*i.e.* the crown] in the following manner:—He spread before him a cover, and carved therein kings [*i.e.* worlds], and marked out their limits and forms, but they could not preserve themselves. Therefore it is written, ‘These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.’ (Gen. xxxvi, 31.) This refers to the primordial kings and primordial Israel. All these were imperfect: he therefore removed them and let them vanish, till he finally descended himself to this cover and assumed a form.” (*Idra Rabba, Sohar*, iii, 148 a.)

This important fact that worlds were created and destroyed prior to the present creation is again and again reiterated in *the Sohar*.<sup>9</sup> These worlds are compared with sparks which fly out from a red hot iron beaten by a hammer, and which are extinguished according to the distance they are removed from the burning mass. “There were old worlds,” *the Sohar* tells us, “which perished as soon as they came into existence: were formless, and they were called sparks. Thus the smith when hammering the iron, lets the sparks fly in all directions. These sparks are the primordial worlds, which could not continue, because the Sacred Aged had not as yet assumed his form [of opposite sexes—the King and Queen], and the master was not yet at his work.” (*Idra Suta, Sohar*, iii, 292 b.) But since nothing can be annihilated—“Nothing perisheth in this world, not even the breath which issues from the

<sup>9</sup> The notion, however, that worlds were created and destroyed prior to the present creation, was propounded in *the Midrash* long before the existence of the Kabbalah. Thus on the verse, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good” (Gen. i, 31), R. Abahu submits א"ר אב"ה מכתן שהקב"ה היה בורא עולמות ומחריבן עד שברא את אלו אמר דין מכתן שהקב"ה היה בורא עולמות ומחריבן ובזאת עולמות ומחריבן עד שברא את אלו אמר דין from this we see that the Holy One, blessed be he, had successively created and destroyed sundry worlds before he created the present world, and when he created the present world he said, this pleases me, the previous ones did not please me. (*Bereshith Rabba*, section or Parsha ix.)

mouth, for this, like everything else, has its place and destination, and the Holy One, blessed be his name! turns it into his service;" (*Sohar*, ii, 110 b.)—these worlds could not be absolutely destroyed. Hence when the question is asked—'Why were these primordial worlds destroyed?' the reply is given—"Because the Man, represented by the ten *Sephiroth*, was not as yet. The human form contains every thing, and as it did not as yet exist, the worlds were destroyed." It is added, "Still when it is said that they perished, it is only meant thereby that they lacked the true form, till the human form came into being, in which all things are comprised, and which also contains all those forms. Hence, though the Scripture ascribes death (ימות) to the kings of Edom, it only denotes a sinking down from their dignity, *i.e.*, the worlds up to that time did not answer to the Divine idea, since they had not as yet the perfect form of which they were capable." (*Idra Rabba*, *Sohar*, iii, 135 b.)

It was therefore after the destruction of previous worlds, and after the *En Soph* or the Boundless assumed the Sefhiric form, that the present world was created. "The Holy One, blessed be he, created and destroyed several worlds before the present one was made, and when this last work was nigh completion, all the things of this world, all the creatures of the universe, in whatever age they were to exist, before ever they entered into this world, were present before God in their true form. Thus are the words of Ecclesiastes to be understood 'What was, shall be, and what has been done, shall be done.'" (*Sohar*, iii, 61 b.) "The lower world is made after the pattern of the upper world; every thing which exists in the upper world is to be found as it were in a copy upon earth; still the whole is one." (*Ibid* ii, 20 a.)

This world, however, is not a creation *ex nihilo*, but is simply an immanent offspring and the image of the King and Queen, or, in other words, a farther expansion or evolution of



*the Sephiroth* which are the emanations of *the En Soph*. This is expressed in *the Sohar* in the following passage—"The indivisible point [the Absolute], who has no limit, and who cannot be comprehended because of his purity and brightness, expanded from without, and formed a brightness which served as a covering to the indivisible point, yet it too could not be viewed in consequence of its immeasurable light. It too expanded from without, and this expansion was its garment. Thus everything originated through a constant upheaving agitation, and thus finally the world originated." (*Sohar*, i, 20 a.) The universe therefore is an immanent emanation from *the Sephiroth*, and reveals and makes visible the Boundless and the Concealed of the Concealed. And though it exhibits the Deity in less splendour than its parents the *Sephiroth*, because it is further removed from the primordial source of light, yet, as it is God manifested, all the multifarious forms in the world point out the unity which they represent; and nothing in it can be destroyed, but everything must return to the source whence it emanated. Hence it is said that "all things of which this world consists, spirit as well as body, will return to their principal, and the root from which they proceeded." (*Sohar*, ii, 218 b.) "He is the beginning and end of all the degrees in the creation. All these degrees are stamped with his seal, and he cannot be otherwise described than by the unity. He is one, notwithstanding the innumerable forms which are in him." (*Ibid* i, 21 a.)

Now these *Sephiroth*, or *the World of Emanation* (עולם אצילות), or the *Atzilutic World*, gave birth to *three* worlds in the following order:—From the conjunction of the KING and QUEEN (*i.e.*, the *ten Sephiroth*) proceeded—I. *The World of Creation*, or *the Briatic World* (עולם הבריאה), also called *The Throne* (כורסיא), which is the abode of pure spirits, and which, like its parents, consists of ten *Sephiroth*, or Emanations. The *Briatic World*, again, gave rise to,

II. *The World of Formation*, or the *Jetziratic World* (עולם היצירה), which is the habitation of the angels, and also consists of ten *Sephiroth*; whilst the *Jetziratic World*, again, sent forth, III. *The World of Action*, or the *Assiatic World* (עולם העשיה), also called *the World of Keliphoth* (עולם הקליפות), which contains *the Spheres* (גלגלים) and matter, and is the residence of the Prince of Darkness and his legions. Or, as the *Sohar* describes it—"After the *Sephiroth*, and for their use, God made *the Throne* (*i.e.*, the World of Creation), with four legs and six steps, thus making ten (*i.e.*, the decade of *Sephiroth* which each world has). . . . For this Throne and its service he formed the ten Angelic hosts (*i.e.*, the World of Formation), *Malachim, Arelim, Chajoth, Ophanim, Chashmalim, Elim, Elohim, Benei Elohim, Ishim*, and *Seraphim* (מלאכים אראלים חיות אופנים השמלים אלים), and for their service, again, he made Samaël and his legions (*i.e.*, the World of Action), who are, as it were, the clouds upon which the angels ride in their descent on the earth, and serve, as it were, for their horses. Hence it is written—"Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt." (Isa. xix, 1.) (*Sohar* ii, 43 a.) There are, therefore, *four* worlds, each of which has a separate Sefiric system, consisting of a decade of emanations. I. *The Atzilatic World*, called alternately *the World of Emanations* (עולם אצילות), *the Image* (דיוקנא = εἰκών with ד prefixed), and *the Heavenly Man* (אדם עלאה), which, by virtue of its being a direct emanation from God and most intimately allied with the Deity, is perfect and immutable. II. *The Briatic World*, called *the World of Creation* (עולם הבריאה) and *the Throne* (כורסיא), which is the immediate emanation of the former, and whose *ten Sephiroth*, being further removed from the *En Soph*, are of a more limited and circumscribed potency, though the substances they comprise are of the purest nature and without



any admixture of matter. III. *The Jetziratic World*, called *the World of Formation* (עולם היצירה) and *the World of Angels* (מלאכיא), which proceeded from the former world, and whose *ten Sephiroth*, though of a still less refined substance than the former, because further removed from the primordial source, are still without matter. It is in this angelic world where those intelligent and uncorporeal beings reside, who are wrapped in a luminous garment, and who assume a sensuous form when they appear to man. And IV. *The Assiatic World*, called *the World of Action* (עולם העשיה) and *the World of Matter* (עולם הקליפות) which emanated from the preceding world, the *ten Sephiroth* of which are made up of the grosser elements of all the former three worlds, and which has sunk down in consequence of its materiality and heaviness. Its substances consist of matter limited by space and perceptible to the senses in a multiplicity of forms. It is subject to constant changes, generations, and corruptions, and is the abode of the Evil Spirit.

Before leaving this doctrine about the creation and the relationship of the Supreme Being to the universe, we must reiterate two things. I. Though the trinity of *the Sephiroth* gave birth to the universe, or, in other words, is an evolution of the emanations, and is thus a further expansion of the Deity itself, it must not be supposed that the Kabbalists believe in a Trinity in our sense of the word. Their view on this subject will best be understood from the following remark in *the Sohar*—"Whoso wishes to have an insight into the sacred unity, let him consider a flame rising from a burning coal or a burning lamp. He will see first a twofold light, a bright white and a black or blue light; the white light is *above*, and ascends in a direct light, whilst the blue or dark light is *below*, and seems as the chair of the former, yet both are so intimately connected together that they constitute only one flame. The seat, however, formed by the

blue or dark light, is again connected with the burning matter which is *under it* again. The white light never changes its colour, it always remains white; but various shades are observed in the lower light, whilst the lowest light, moreover, takes two directions—*above* it is connected with the white light, and *below* with the burning matter. Now this is constantly consuming itself, and perpetually ascends to the upper light, and thus everything merges into a single unity (וכולא אתקשר ביחודא חד) *Sohar*, i, 51 a).<sup>10</sup>

And II. The creation, or the universe, is simply the garment of God woven from the Deity's own substance; or, as Spinoza expresses it, God is the immanent basis of the universe. For although, to reveal himself to us, the Concealed of all the Concealed sent forth the ten emanations called the *Form of God*, *Form of the Heavenly Man*, yet since even this luminous form was too dazzling for our vision, it had to assume another form, or had to put on another garment which consists of the universe. The universe, therefore, or the visible world, is a further expansion of the Divine Substance, and is called in the Kabbalah "*the Garment of God*." Thus we are told, "when the Concealed of all the Concealed wanted to reveal himself, he first made a point [*i.e.* the first *Sephira*], shaped it into a sacred form [*i.e.* the totality of the *Sephiroth*], and covered it with a rich and splendid garment that is the world." (*Sohar*, i, 2 a).

### III. *The Creation of Angels and Men.*

The different worlds which successively emanated from the *En Soph* and from each other, and which sustain the relationship to the Deity of first, second, third, and fourth generations, are, with the exception of the first (*i.e.*, the World of Emanations), inhabited by spiritual beings of various grades.

<sup>10</sup> The question, however, about the doctrine of the Trinity in other passages of the *Sohar* will be discussed more amply in the sequel, where we shall point out the relation of the Kabbalah to Christianity.



“ God animated every part of the firmament with a separate spirit, and forthwith all the heavenly hosts were before him. This is meant by the Psalmist, when he says (Ps. xxxiii, 6) ‘By the breath of his mouth were made all their hosts.’ (*Sohar*, iii, 68 a.) These angels consist of two kinds—good and bad; they have their respective princes, and occupy the three habitable worlds in the following order. As has already been remarked, the first world, or the Archetypal *Man*, in whose image everything is formed, is occupied by no one else. The angel METATRON (מטטרון) occupies the second or *the Briatic World* (עולם בריאה), which is the first habitable world; he alone constitutes the world of pure spirits. He is the garment of שדי *i.e.*, the visible manifestation of the Deity; his name is numerically equivalent to that of the Lord. (*Sohar*, iii, 231 a.) He governs the visible world, preserves the unity, harmony, and the revolutions of all the spheres, planets and heavenly bodies, and is the Captain of the myriads of the angelic hosts<sup>11</sup> who people the second habitable or *the Jetziratic*

<sup>11</sup> The Kabbalistic description of *Metatron* is taken from the Jewish angelology of a much older date than this theosophy. Thus Ben Asai and Ben Soma already regard *the divine voice*, the λόγος (קול אלהים) as Metatron. (*Beresh. Rab.*, Parsha v.) He is called *the Great Teacher, the Teacher of Teachers* (ספרא רבא), and it is for this reason that Enoch, who walked in close communion with God, and taught mankind by his holy example, is said by the Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan b. Uzziel, to ‘have received the name *Metatron, the Great Teacher*’ after he was transplanted. (Gen. v, 24.) Metatron, moreover, is the Presence Angel (שר השנים), the Angel of the Lord that was sent to go before Israel (Exod. xxiii, 21); he is the visible manifestation of the Deity, for in him is the name of the Lord, *i.e.*, his name and that of the Deity are identical, inasmuch as they are of the same numerical value (viz.:—שדי and מטטרון are the same according to the exegetical rule called Gematria, ש 300 + ד 4 + ט 10 = 314; ט 9 + ט 9 + מ 40 + נ 50 + ו 6 + ר 200 + ש 300 = 645. See Rashi on Exod. xxiii, 21, רבינו אפרים אמר זה מטטרון ששמו נשם רבו מטטרון בנמטריא שדי and *Sanhedrim* 38 b). So exalted is Metatron’s position in the ancient Jewish angelology, that we are told that when Elisha b. Abaja, also called Acher, saw this angel who occupies the first position after the Deity, he exclaimed, ‘Peradventure, but far be it, there are two Supreme Powers’ (שמה דס ושלוש שתי רשויות הן) *Talmud, Chagiga*, 15 a). The etymology of מטטרון is greatly disputed; but there is no doubt that it is to be derived from METATOR, messenger, outrider, way maker, as has been shown by Elias Levita, and is maintained by Cassel (*Ersch und Gruber’s Encyclopädie*, section ii, vol. xxvii, s. v.; JUDEN, p. 40, note 84). Sachs (*Beiträge zur Sprach- und Alterthumsforschung*, vol. i, Berlin 1852, p. 108) rightly remarks that this etymology is fixed by the passage from *Siphra*, quoted in *Kaphter-Va-Pherach*, c. x, p. 34 b מצבנו של הקב"ה נעשה מטטרון למשה והראהו כל ארץ ישראל *the finger of God was the messenger or guide to Moses, and showed him all the land of Israel.*

*World* (עולם יצירה), and who are divided into ten ranks, answering to the *ten Sephiroth*. Each of these angels is set over a different part of the universe. One has the control of one sphere, another of another heavenly body; one angel has charge of the sun, another of the moon, another of the earth, another of the sea, another of the fire, another of the wind, another of the light, another of the seasons, &c. &c.; and these angels derive their names from the heavenly bodies they respectively guard. Hence one is called Venus (ננה), one Mars (מאדמים), one the substance of Heaven (עצם השמים), one the angel of light (אוריאל), and another the angel of fire (נוריאל.) (Comp. *Sohar* i, 42, &c.) The demons, constituting the second class of angels, which are the grossest and most deficient of all forms, and are *the shells* (קליפות) of being, inhabit the third habitable or *Assiatic World* (עולם עשיה). They, too, form ten degrees, answering to the decade of *Sephiroth*, in which darkness and impurity increase with the descent of each degree. Thus the two first degrees are nothing more than the absence of all visible form and organisation, which the Mosaic cosmology describes in the words תהו ובהו before the hexahemeron, and which the Septuagint renders by ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος. The third degree is the abode of the darkness which the book of Genesis describes as having in the beginning covered the face of the earth. Whereupon follow seven infernal halls (שבע היכלות) = HELLS, occupied by the demons, which are the incarnation of all human vices, and which torture those poor deluded beings who suffered themselves to be led astray in this world. These seven infernal halls are subdivided into endless compartments, so as to

The termination ך has been appended to מטטרן to obtain the same numerical value, as שדי. The derivation of it from μετὰ θρόνον, because this angel is immediately under the divine throne (כורסיא), which is maintained by Frank (*Kabbala*, p. 43), Graetz (*Gnosticismus*, p. 44) and others, has been shown by Frankel (*Zeitschrift*, 1846. vol. iii, p. 113), and Cassel (*Ersch und Gruber's Encyklop.* section ii, vol. xxvii, p. 41), to be both contrary to the form of the word and to the description of Metatron.



afford a separate chamber of torture for every species of sin. The prince of this region of darkness, who is called Satan in the Bible, is denominated by the Kabbalah, *Samaël* (סמאל) = *angel of poison* or *of death*. He is the same evil spirit, Satan, the serpent, who seduced Eve.<sup>12</sup> He has a wife, called the Harlot or the Woman of Whoredom (אשת זנונים), but they are both generally represented as united in the one name of *the Beast* (חיה). Comp. *Sohar*, ii, 255—259, with i, 35 b.)

The whole universe, however, was incomplete, and did not receive its finishing stroke till man was formed, who is the acme of the creation, and the microcosm uniting in himself the totality of beings. "The HEAVENLY ADAM (*i.e.*, the ten *Sephiroth*), who emanated from the highest primordial obscurity (*i.e.*, the *En Soph*), created the EARTHLY ADAM." (*Sohar*, ii, 70 b.) "Man is both the import and the highest degree of creation, for which reason he was formed on the sixth day. As soon as man was created, everything was complete, including the upper and nether worlds, for everything is comprised in man. He unites in himself all forms." (*Sohar*, iii, 48 a.)<sup>13</sup> Man was created with faculties and features far transcending those of the angels. The bodies of the protoplasts were not of that gross matter which constitutes our bodies. Adam and Eve, before the fall, were wrapped in that luminous ethereal substance in which the celestial spirits are clad, and which is neither subject to want nor to sensual desires. They were envied by the angels of the highest rank. The fall, however, changed it all, as we are told in the following passage—"When Adam

<sup>12</sup> The view that the serpent which seduced the protoplasts is identical with Satan is not peculiar to the Kabbalah. It is stated in the *Talmud* in almost the same words הוא יצר הרע הוא השטן הוא מלאך המות כמתניהא תנא יורד ומטע עולה ומטמא the *evil spirit, Satan, and the angel of death, are the same*. It is propounded in the *Boraitha* that he descends and seduces; he then ascends and accuses, and then comes down again and kills. *Baba Bathra*, 16 a.

<sup>13</sup> כיון דנברא אדם אחתקן כלא וכל מה דלעילא ותתא וכלא אתכליל נאדם . . . איהו שלימותא  
דכלא ודחור דלק ג' דף מ"ח א'



dwelled in the garden of Eden, he was dressed in the celestial garment, which is a garment of heavenly light. But when he was expelled from the garden of Eden, and became subject to the wants of this world, what is written? 'The Lord God made coats of skins unto Adam and to his wife, and clothed them' (Gen. iii, 21); for prior to this they had garments of light—light of that light which was used in the garden of Eden." (*Sohar*, ii, 229 b.) The garments of skin, therefore, mean our present body, which was given to our first parents in order to adapt them to the changes which the fall introduced.

But even in the present form, the righteous are above the angels,<sup>14</sup> and every man is still the microcosm, and every member of his body corresponds to a constituent part of the visible universe. "What is man? Is he simply skin, flesh, bones, and veins? No! That which constitutes the real man is the soul, and those things which are called the skin, the flesh, the bones, and the veins, all these are merely a garment, they are simply the clothes of the man, but not the man himself. When man departs, he puts off these garments wherewith the son of man is clothed. Yet are all these bones and sinews formed in the secret of the highest wisdom, after the heavenly image. The skin represents the firmament, which extends everywhere, and covers everything like a garment—as it is written, 'Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.' (Ps. clv, 2) . . . The flesh represents the deteriorated part of the world; . . . the bones and the veins represent the heavenly chariot, the inner powers, the servants of God. . . . But these are the

<sup>14</sup> That the righteous are greater than the angels is already propounded in the Talmud (גדולים צדיקים יותר ממלאכי השׁמׁי *Sanhedrim* 93 a); and it is asserted that no one angel can do two things (אין מלאך אחד עושה שתי שליחות *Bereshith Rabba*, section 1), for which reason three angels had to be sent, one to announce to Sarai the birth of Isaac, the other to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and the third to save Lot and his family; whilst a man can perform several duties. The superiority of man over angels is also asserted in the New Testament. (1 Cor. vi, 3.)

outer garments, for in the inward part is the deep mystery of the heavenly man. Everything here below, as above, is mysterious. Therefore it is written—‘ God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ’ (Gen. i, 27) ; repeating the word God twice, one for the man and the other for the woman. The mystery of the earthly man is after the mystery of the Heavenly Man. And just as we see in the firmament above, covering all things, different signs which are formed of the stars and planets, and which contain secret things and profound mysteries, studied by those who are wise and expert in these signs ; so there are in the skin, which is the cover of the body of the son of man, and which is like the sky that covers all things, signs and features which are the stars and planets of the skin, indicating secret things and profound mysteries, whereby the wise are attracted, who understand to read the mysteries in the human face.” (*Sohar*, ii, 76 a.) He is still the presence of God upon earth (שכינתא), and the very form of the body depicts the Tetragrammaton, the most sacred name Jehovah (יהוה). Thus the head is the form of the י, the arms and the shoulders are like the ה, the breast represents the form of the ו, whilst the two legs with the back represent the form of the second ה. (*Sohar*, ii, 42 a.)<sup>15</sup>

The souls of all these epitomes of the universe are pre-existent in the World of Emanations,<sup>16</sup> and are without exception

<sup>15</sup> The Karmarthi, who interpreted the precepts of Islamism allegorically, also maintained that the human body represents the letters in the name of God. When standing the human body represents an *Elif*; when kneeling a *Lâm*, and when prostrated on the ground a *Hê*, so that the body is like a book in which may be read the name ALLAH. De Sacy, *Introduction à l'Exposé de la Religion des Druzes*, pp. 86, 87. Comp. Frank, *Die Kabbala*, p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> The pre-existence of the human souls in the celestial regions was believed by the Jews before the Kabbalah came into vogue. We find this doctrine in the Book of Wisdom (viii, 20) ; in Josephus, where we are told that the Essenes believed ‘ that souls were immortal, and that they descended from the pure air, συμπλέκεσθαι ὡς περ εἰρκταῖς τοῖς σώμασι, to be chained to bodies ’ (*de Bell. Jud.* ii, 12) ; by Philo, who says ‘ the air was full of them, and that those which were nearest the earth κατὰσιν ἐκδεθρομέναι σώμασι θνητοῖς, descending to be tied to mortal bodies, παλινδρομοῦσι αὖθις, return back to bodies, being



destined to inhabit human bodies, and pursue their course upon earth for a certain number of years. Hence we are told that, "When the Holy One, blessed be his name, wished to create the world, the universe was before him in idea. He then formed all the souls which are destined for the whole human race. All were minutely before him in the same form which they were to assume in the human body. He looked at each one of them; and there were some among them which would corrupt their way upon the earth." (*Sohar*, i, 96 b). Like the *Sephiroth* from which it emanates, every soul has ten potencies, which are subdivided into a trinity of triads, and are respectively represented by (I) *The Spirit*, (נשמה), which is the highest degree of being, and which both corresponds to and is operated upon by THE CROWN (כתר), representing the highest triad in the *Sephiroth*, called the Intellectual World; (II) *The Soul* (רוח), which is the seat of good and evil, as well as the moral qualities, and which both corresponds to and is operated upon by BEAUTY (תפארת), representing the second triad in the *Sephiroth*, called the Moral World; and (III) *The Cruder Spirit* (נפש), which is immediately connected with the body, is the direct cause of its lower functions, instincts, and animal life, and which both corresponds to and is operated upon by FOUNDATION (יסוד), representing the third triad in the *Sephiroth*, called the Material World.

In its original state each soul is androgynous, and is separated into male and female when it descends on earth to be borne in a human body. We have seen that the souls of

desirous to live in them.' (*De Gignat*. p. 222, C.; *De Somniis*, p. 455, D. Comp. Arnald on the Book of Wisdom, viii, 20, and Whitby on John ix, 2., where these quotations and others are given); and in the Talmud where it is declared that the human souls which are to be born (רוחות ונשמות שעתידין להתבראות), have their abode in the seventh heaven (*Chagiga*, 12 b); that they leave gradually the storehouse of souls to people this earth (על שכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף) (*Jebamoth*, 62; *Aboda Sara*, 5; *Nidda*, 13); and that the Holy One, blessed be he, took counsel with them when he was about to create the world נפשותן של צדיקין נמלך הקב"ה וברא את העולם (*Bereshith Rabba*, section viii).



the righteous, in the world of spirits, are superior in dignity to the heavenly powers and the ministering angels. It might, therefore, be asked why do these souls leave such an abode of bliss, and come into this vale of tears to dwell in tabernacles of clay? The only reply to be given is that these happy souls have no choice in the matter. Indeed we are told that the soul, before assuming a human body, addresses God—‘ Lord of the Universe ! I am happy in this world, and do not wish to go into another world, where I shall be a bond-maid, and be exposed to all kinds of pollutions.’ (*Sohar*, ii, 96.)<sup>17</sup> And can you wonder at this pitiful ejaculation? Should your philanthropic feelings and your convictions that our heavenly Father ordains all things for the good of his children, impel you to ask that an explanation of this mystery might graciously be vouchsafed to you in order to temper your compassion and calm your faith, then take this parable. “ A son was born to a King ; he sends him to the country, there to be nursed and brought up till he is grown up, and instructed in the ceremonies and usages of the royal palace. When the King hears that the education of his son is finished, what does his fatherly love impel him to do ? For his son’s sake he sends for the Queen his mother, conducts him into the palace and makes merry with him all day. Thus the Holy One, blessed be he, has a son with the Queen : this is the heavenly and sacred soul. He sends him into the country, that is into this world, therein to grow up and to learn the customs of the court. When the King hears that this his son has grown up in the country, and that it is time to bring him into the palace, what does his love for his son impel him to do ? He sends, for his sake,

<sup>17</sup> The notion about the reluctance of the soul to enter into this world is also not peculiar to the Kabbalah. The most ancient tract of the Mishna thus speaks of the soul : “ Against thy will thou becomest an embryo, and against thy will thou art born ” (על כרחך אהה נוצר ועל כרחך אהה נולד) (*Aboth*, iv. 29) ; on which Bartenora, in his commentary, remarks : “ The soul does not wish to quit the pure abode of the curtain which encloses the Holy of Holies.”

for the Queen and conducts him to the palace." (*Sohar*, i, 245 b.)

As has already been remarked, the human soul, before it descends into the world, is androgynous, or in other words, consists of two component parts, each of which comprises all the elements of our spiritual nature. Thus the *Sohar* tells us—"Each soul and spirit, prior to its entering into this world, consists of a male and female united into one being. When it descends on this earth the two parts separate and animate two different bodies. At the time of marriage, the Holy One, blessed be he, who knows all souls and spirits, unites them again as they were before, and they again constitute one body and one soul, forming as it were the right and left of one individual; therefore 'There is nothing new under the sun.' (Ecl. i, 9.) . . . . This union, however, is influenced by the deeds of the man and by the ways in which he walks. If the man is pure and his conduct is pleasing in the sight of God, he is united with that female part of his soul which was his component part prior to his birth." (*Sohar*, i, 91 b.)<sup>18</sup> The soul carries her knowledge with her to the earth, so that "every thing which she learns here below she knew already, before she entered into this world." (*Ibid.*, iii, 61 b.)

Since the form of the body as well as the soul, is made after the image of the Heavenly Man, a figure of the forthcoming body which is to clothe the newly descending soul, is sent down from the celestial regions, to hover over the couch of the husband and wife when they copulate, in order that the conception may be formed according to this model. "At

18 כל אינן רוחין ונשמות כלן כליל דבר ונוקבא דמתחברין כדא ואחמסין בידא דהוא ממנא שליחא דאתקדש על ערוותיהן [עיוותיהן] דבני נשא ולילא שמיה ובשעתא דנחתין ואחמסין בידו מתפדישין ולזמין דא אקדים מן דא ואחית להו בבני נשא ובר מנא [מחא] עידן דווגא דלהן קב"ה דידע אינן רוחין ונשמות מתבר לון דבדקדמיחא ומכרוא עליהו ובר אחחברן אחעבירו חר נשא חד נשמתא ימינא ושמאלא כדא חו ובעין כך אין כל חדש תחת השמש ואי תימא הא תנין לית וווגא אלא לפיט עובדו ואורחיו דבר נש הכי הוא ודאי דאי וכי ועובדו אתכשרן וכי להוא דיליה לאחחברא ביה כמה דנפיק ודור דלק א דף צא ב



connubial intercourse on earth, the Holy One, blessed be he, sends a human form which bears the impress of the divine stamp. This form is present at intercourse, and if we were permitted to see it we should perceive over our heads an image resembling a human face; and it is in this image that we are formed. As long as this image is not sent by God and does not descend and hover over our heads, there can be no conception, for it is written—‘And God created man in his own image.’ (Gen. i, '27.) This image receives us when we enter the world, it develops itself with us when we grow, and accompanies us when we depart this life; as it is written—‘Surely, man walked in an image’ (Ps. xxxvii, 5): and this image is from heaven. When the souls are to leave their heavenly abode, each soul separately appears before the Holy King, dressed in a sublime form, with the features in which it is to appear in this world. It is from this sublime form that the image proceeds. It is the third after the soul, and precedes it on the earth; it is present at the conception, and there is no conception in the world where this image is not present.” (*Sohar*, iii, 104 *a b.*)<sup>19</sup>

All human countenances are divisible into the four primordial types of faces, which appeared at the mysterious chariot throne in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, viz., the face of man, of the lion, the ox and the eagle. Our faces resemble these more or less according to the rank which our souls occupy in the intellectual or moral dominion. “And physiognomy does not consist in the external lineaments, but in the features which are mysteriously drawn in us. The features

19 בספרא דשלמה מלכא אשתכחנא דבשעתא דווגא אשתכח לחתא שדר קב"ה חר דיוקנא כפרצופא ד"ג רשימא חקיקא בצולמא וקיימא על ההוא וווגא ואלמלי אחיהב רשו לעינא למחוי חמי ב"ג על רשיה הד צולמא רשימא כפרצופא דבר נש ובההוא צולמא אתברי ב"ג ועד דקיימא [ס"א ועד לא קיימא] ההוא צולמא דשרר ליה מאריה על רשיה וישתכח חמן לא אתברי ב"ג הה"ד ויברא אלים את האדם בצלמו ההוא צלם אודמן לקבליה עד דנפיק לעלמא כד נפק בדהוא צלם אתרבי בההוא צלם אויל הה"ד אך בצלם יתהלך איש והאי צלם איהו מלעילא בשעתא דאינון רוחין נפקין מאתרייהו כל רוחא ורוחא אתתקן קמי מלכא קדישא בתקוני יקר בפרצופא דקאי' בהאי עלמא ומההוא דיוקנא הקונא יקר נפיק האי צלם ודא הליהאדא לרוחא ואקדימת בהאי עלמא בשעתא דווגא אשתכח ולית לך וווגא בעלמא ולא אשתכח בגווייהו וזהו הלק ג דף קד א ב,



in the face change according to the form which is peculiar to the inward face of the spirit. It is the spirit which produces all those physiognomical peculiarities known to the wise; and it is only through the spirit that the features have any meaning. All those spirits and souls which proceed from Eden (*i.e.*, the highest wisdom) have a peculiar form, which is reflected in the face." (*Sohar*, ii, 73 *b.*) The face thus lighted up by the peculiar spirit inhabiting the body, is the mirror of the soul; and the formation of the head indicates the character and temper of the man. An arched forehead is a sign of a cheerful and profound spirit, as well as of a distinguished intellect; a broad but flat forehead indicates foolishness and silliness; whilst a forehead which is flat, compressed on the sides and spiral, betokens narrowness of mind and vanity. (Comp. *Sohar*, ii, 71 *b.*, 75 *a.*) .

As a necessary condition of free existence and of moral being, the souls are endowed by the Deity, from the very beginning, with the power of adhering in close proximity to the primordial source of infinite light from which they emanated, and of alienating themselves from that source and pursuing an independent and opposite course. Hence, Simon ben Jochai said, "If the Holy One, blessed be he, had not put within us both the good and the evil desire, which are denominated light and darkness, the created man would have neither virtue nor vice. For this reason it is written—'Behold, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.' (Deut. xxx, 15.) To this the disciples replied, Wherefore is all this? Would it not be better if reward and punishment had not existed at all, since in that case man would have been incapable of sinning and of doing evil. He rejoined, It was meet and right that he should be created as he was created, because the Law was created for him, wherein are written punishments for the

wicked and rewards for the righteous ; and there would not have been any reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked but for created man." (*Sohar* i, 23 a.) So complete is their independence, that souls, even in their pre-existent state, can and do choose which way they intend to pursue. " All souls which are not guiltless in this world, have already alienated themselves in heaven from the Holy One, blessed be he ; they have thrown themselves into an abyss at their very existence, and have anticipated the time when they are to descend on earth. . . . Thus were the souls before they came into this world." (*Ibid.*, iii, 61 b.)

#### IV. *The Destiny of Man and the Universe.*

As the *En Soph* constituted man the microcosm, and as the Deity is reflected in this epitome of the universe more than in any component part of the creation, all things visible and invisible are designed to aid him in passing through his probationary state here below, in gathering that experience for which his soul has been sent down, and in returning in a pure state to that source of light from which his soul emanated. This destiny of man—*i.e.*, the reunion with the Deity from which he emanated—is the constant desire both of God and man, and is an essential principle of the soul, underlying its very essence. Discarding that blind power from our nature, which governs our animal life, which never quits this earth, and which therefore plays no part in our spiritual being, the soul possesses two kinds of powers and two sorts of feelings. It has the faculty for that extraordinary prophetic knowledge, which was vouchsafed to Moses in an exceptional manner, called *the Luminous Mirror* (אספקלריא נהרא = *specularia*), and the ordinary knowledge termed *the Non-Luminous Mirror* (אספקלריא דלא נהרא), respectively represented in the earthly Paradise by the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil ; and it possesses

the higher feeling of love and the lower feeling of fear.<sup>20</sup> Now the full fruition of that higher knowledge and of that loftier feeling of love can only be reaped when the soul returns to the Infinite Source of Light, and is wrapped in that luminous garment which the protoplasts forfeited through the fall. Thus we are told, "Come and see when the soul reaches that place which is called the Treasury of Life (צִרְוֵרָא דְחַיִּי), she enjoys a bright and luminous mirror (אֶסְפִּקְלָרִיָא דְנִהָרָא), which receives its light from the highest heaven. The soul could not bear this light but for the luminous mantle which she puts on. For just as the soul, when sent to this earth, puts on an earthly garment to preserve herself here, so she receives above a shining garment, in order to be able to look without injury into the mirror whose light proceeds from the Lord of Light. Moses too could not approach to look into that higher light which he saw, without putting on such an ethereal garment; as it is written—'And Moses went into the midst of the cloud' (Exod. xxiv, 18), which is to be translated *by means* of the cloud wherewith he wrapped himself as if dressed in a garment. At that time Moses almost discarded the whole of his earthly nature; as it is written,—'And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights' (*ibid.*); and he thus approached that dark cloud where God is enthroned. In this wise the departed spirits of the righteous dress themselves in the upper regions in luminous garments, to be able to endure that light which streams from the Lord of Light." (*Sohar*, i, 65 b, 66 a.)

The two feelings of love and fear are designed to aid the soul in achieving her high destiny, when she shall no more

<sup>20</sup> The two kinds of faculties, as well as the two sorts of feelings, are also mentioned in the Talmud. Thus it is said—"All the prophets looked into the NOX-LUMINOUS MIRROR, whilst our teacher, Moses, looked into the LUMINOUS MIRROR." (כל הנביאים נסתכלו באֶסְפִּקְלָרִיָא שְׁמִינָה בְּמִצְרָה מִשֶּׁה רַבִּינוּ נִסְתַּחֵל בְּאֶסְפִּקְלָרִיָא) (*Jebamoth*, 49 b). And again—"Also the divine service which is engendered by fear and not by love, has its merit." (*Jerusalem Berachoth*, 44; *Babylon Sota*, 22 a.)



look through the dark glass, but see face to face in the presence of the Luminous Mirror, by permeating all acts of obedience and divine worship. And though perfect love, which is serving God purely out of love, like that higher knowledge, is to be man's destiny in heaven, yet the soul may attain some of it on earth, and endeavour to serve God out of love and not from fear, as thereby she will have an antepast on earth of its union with the Deity, which is to be so rapturous and indissoluble in heaven. "Yet is the service which arises from fear not to be depreciated, for fear leads to love. It is true that he who obeys God out of love has attained to the highest degree, and already belongs to the saints of the world to come, but it must not be supposed that to worship God out of fear is no worship. Such a service has also its merit, though in this case the union of the soul with the Deity is slight. There is only one degree which is higher than fear: it is love. In love is the mystery of the divine unity. It is love which unites the higher and lower degrees together; it elevates everything to that position where everything must be one. This is also the mystery of the words, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one God.'" (*Sohar*, ii, 216 a.)

Hence it is that these two principles play so important a part in the devotions and contemplations of the Kabbalists: Love is made to correspond to MERCY, the fourth *Sephira*, whilst Fear is made to answer to RIGOUR, the fifth *Sephira*; and it is asserted that when these two principles are thoroughly combined by the righteous in their divine worship and acts of obedience, the name Jehovah, which comprises these two principles, and which is now rent in twain by the preponderance of sin and disobedience, will be re-united. Then, and then only, will all the souls return to the bosom of the Father of our spirits; then will the restitution of all things take place, and the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of God even as the waters cover the sea. This is the reason why the

Kabbalists utter the following prayer prior to the performance of any of the commandments : “ For the re-union of the Holy One, blessed be his name, and his Shechinah, I do this in love and fear, in fear and love, for the union of the name יה with יה into a perfect harmony ! I pronounce this in the name of all Israel ! ”<sup>21</sup> In order to represent this union to the senses the words *Fear* יראה and *Love* אהבה, are divided, and so placed above each other that they may be read either across or down, as follows :—

י	ה
א	ה
ה	ב
א	ה

When thus fulfilling the commandments the pious not only enjoy a prelibation of that sublime light which shines in heaven, and which will serve them as a garment when they enter into the other world and appear before the Holy One (*Sohar*, ii, 299 *b*), but become on earth already the habitation of the *Sephiroth*, and each saint has that *Sephira* incarnate in him which corresponds to the virtue he most cultivates, or to the feature most predominant in his character. Among the patriarchs, therefore, who were the most exalted in piety, we find that LOVE, the fourth *Sephira*, was incarnate in Abraham ; RIGOUR, the fifth *Sephira*, in Isaac ; MILDNESS, the sixth *Sephira*, in Jacob ; FIRMNESS, the seventh *Sephira*, in Moses ; SPLENDOUR, the eighth *Sephira*, in Aaron ; FOUNDATION, the ninth *Sephira*, in Joseph ; and KINGDOM, the tenth *Sephira*, was incarnate in David. Hence all the righteous who constitute the emanations, of the *ten Sephiroth* are divided into three classes corresponding to the three principles or Pillars exhibited in the Kabbalistic Tree, viz. :—I. THE PILLAR OF MERCY (חסד), represented by the

21 לשם יחוד קב"ה ושכינתה ברחימו ודחילו וברחילו ורחימו ליחרא שם י"ה בו"ה ביחורא שלים  
בשם כל ישראל

Patriarch Abraham (comp. **חסד לאברהם** Micah, vii, 20;) II. THE PILLAR OF JUSTICE (**פחד**), represented by Isaac (comp. **פחד יצחק** Gen. xxxi, 42); and III. THE MIDDLE PILLAR, represented by Jacob (comp. **אמת ליעקב** Micah vii, 20), which is the connecting or uniting principle. (*Sohar*, i, 146 a; 148 b.) It is for this reason that the patriarchs are denominated the Chariot-throne of the Lord.

Following the paths of righteousness, the saints on earth enjoy the protection of heaven in an especial manner, by virtue of the divine wisdom inherent in them, for they are able to decipher the signs which God has put in the firmament to shield them from accidents. "In heaven above, that surrounds the universe, are signs in which the deepest mysteries are concealed. These signs are constellations and stars, which are studied and deciphered by the wise." (*Sohar*, ii, 76 a.) Hence the admonition—"He who has to start on a journey very early, should rise at daybreak, look carefully towards the east, and he will perceive certain signs resembling letters which pierce through the sky and appear above the horizon. These shining forms are those of the letters wherewith God created heaven and earth. Now, if man knows the secret meaning of the sacred name, consisting of forty-two letters, and meditates on it with becoming devotion and enthusiasm, he will perceive six *Jods* (**יוד**) in the pure sky, three to the right and three to the left, as well as three *Vavs* (**ווי**), which hover about in the heavenly arch. These are the letters of the priestly benediction (**ברכת כהנים**). . . . In the bright morning he will perceive a pillar towards the west, hanging perpendicularly over the earthly paradise, and another pillar hanging over the centre of paradise. This luminous pillar has the three colours of a purple web: three birds stand on it, singing in the following manner. The first sings, 'Hallelujah! Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord' (Ps. cxiii, 1); the second, 'Blessed be the name



of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore' (*ibid.* v. 2); and the third, 'From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised' (*ibid.* v. 3). This is the time when the pious traveller is to offer up his morning prayer, in order that he may secure heaven's blessings and the sublime and divine mercy as his sure guide." (*Sohar*, ii, 130 b.)

Now since it is an absolute condition of the soul to return to the Infinite Source from which it emanated, after developing all those perfections, the germs of which are eternally implanted in it; and since some souls do not at once develope these fruits of righteousness, which precludes their immediate reunion with their Primordial Source, another term of life is vouchsafed to them, so that they may be able to cultivate those virtues which they stifled in their former bodily life, and without which it is impossible for them to return to their heavenly home. Hence, if the soul, in its first assuming a human body and sojourn on earth, fails to acquire that experience for which it descends from heaven, and becomes contaminated by that which is polluting, it must re-inhabit a body again and again till it is able to ascend in a purified state through repeated trials. Thus we are told that<sup>22</sup> "All souls are subject to transmigration (עאין בגלגולא), and men do not know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be he; they do not know that they are brought before the tribunal, both before they enter into this world and after they quit it, they are ignorant of the many transmigrations and secret probations which they have to undergo, and of the number of souls and spirits which enter into this world, and do not return to the palace of the Heavenly King. Men do not know how the

22 כל נשמחין עאלין בגלגולא ולא ידעין בני נשא אורחוי דקודשא בריך הוא והיך קיימא טיקלא והיך אורחוי בני נשא בכל יומא ובכל עידן והיך נשמחין עאלין בדינא עד לא יתין להאי עלמא והיך עאלין בדינא לבתר דנפקי מהאי עלמא. כמה גלגולין וכמה עוברין סתמין עבדין קודשא בריך הוא בהדי כמה נשמחין ערפילאין ובמה רוחין ערפילאין אולין בההוא עלמא דלא עאלין לפרגודא דמלכא.

souls revolve like a stone which is thrown from a sling ; as it is written—‘ And the souls of thine enemies them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.’ (1 Sam., xxv, 29.) But the time is at hand when these mysteries will be disclosed.” (*Sohar*, ii, 99 b.)

The transmigration of the soul into another body, however, is restricted to three times ; and if two souls in their third residence in human bodies are still too weak to resist all earthly trammels and to acquire the necessary experience, they are both united and sent into one body, so that they may be able conjointly to learn that which they were too feeble to do separately. It sometimes, however, happens that it is the singleness and isolation of the soul which is the source of her weakness, and she requires help to pass through her probation. In that case she chooses for a companion a soul which has more strength and better fortune. The stronger of the two then becomes as it were the mother ; she carries the sickly one in her bosom, and nurses her from her own substance, just as a woman nurses her child. Such an association is therefore called pregnancy (*עיבור*), because the stronger soul gives as it were life and substance to the weaker companion.<sup>23</sup>

וכמה עלמין אההפך בהו ועלמא דאתהפך בכמה פליאן סתימין ובני נשא לא ידעין ולא משגיחין וחד מתגלגלן נשמתין כאבנא בקוספתא כמה דאת אמר ואת נפש אויבך יקלענה בתוך כף הקלע השתא איח לגלאה דהא כלי' וזהו חלק ב' דף צט ב'

23 According to Josephus, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls into other bodies (*μετεμψύχωσης*), was also held by the Pharisees (comp. *Antiq.* xviii, 1, 3 : de Bell. Jud. ii, 8, 14), restricting, however, the metempsychosis to the righteous. And though the Midrashim and the Talmud are silent about it, yet from Saadia's vituperations against it (*אבל אומר שמצאתי אנשים ממי שנקראים יהודים*) *Emunoth ve-Deoth*, vi, 7 ; viii, 3) there is no doubt that this doctrine was held among some Jews in the ninth century of the present era. At all events it is perfectly certain that the Karaite Jews firmly believed in it ever since the seventh century. (Comp. Frankel, *Monatschrift*, x, 177, &c.) St. Jerome assures us that it was also propounded among the early Christians as an esoteric and traditional doctrine which was entrusted to the select few, (*abscondite quasi in foveis viperarum versari et quasi haereditario malo serpere in paucis*. Comp. *epist. ad Demetriadem*) ; and Origen was convinced that it was only by means of this doctrine that certain Scriptural narratives, such as the struggle of Jacob with Esau before their birth, the reference about Jeremiah when still in his mother's womb, and many others, can possibly be explained. (*περί ἀρχῶν* i, 1, cap. vii ; *Adver. Celsum*, i, 3.



As the world, like all other living beings, is a further expansion of the Deity's own substance, it too must ultimately share that blessedness which it enjoyed in its first evolution. This is indicated in the letter **ב** with which the history of the creation begins (*i.e.* **ב"ראשית**), and which is also the first letter in the word *blessing* (**ב"רכה**).<sup>24</sup> Even the archangel of wickedness, or the *venomous beast* (**חויא בישא**), or Samäel (**סמאל**), as he is called, will be restored to his angelic nature and name, inasmuch as he too, like all other beings, proceeded from the same infinite source of all things. The first part of his name (**סס**), which signifies *venom*, will then be dropped, and he will retain the second part (**אל**), which is the common name of all the angels. This, however, will only take place at the advent of Messiah. But his coming is retarded by the very few new souls which enter into the world; as many of the old souls which have already inhabited bodies have to re-enter those bodies which are now born, in consequence of having polluted themselves in their previous bodily existence, and the soul of the Messiah, which, like other souls, has its pre-existence in the world of the *Sephiroth*, cannot be born till all human souls have passed through their period of probation on this earth, because it is to be the last born one at the end of days. Then the great Jubilee year will commence, when the whole pleroma of souls (**אוצר הנשמות**), cleaned and purified shall return into the bosom of the Infinite Source; and they shall be in "the Palace which is situate in the secret and most elevated part of heaven, and which is called the *Palace of Love* (**היכל אהבה**). There the profoundest mysteries are; there dwells the Heavenly King, blessed be he, with the holy souls, and is united with them by a loving kiss.

<sup>24</sup> The notion that the creation is a blessing, and that this is indicated in the first letter, is already propounded in the Midrash, as may be seen from the following remark. The reason why the Law begins with *Beth*, the second letter of the Alphabet, and not with *Aleph*, the first letter, is that the former is the first letter in the word *blessing*, while the latter is the first letter in the word *accursed*, *למה בבית מפני שהוא לשון ברכה ולא בא"ל שהוא לשון אריה* (*Midrash Rabba*, sec. i).



(*Sohar*, ii, 97 a.) “This kiss is the union of the soul with the substance from which it emanated.” (*Ibid.*, i, 168 a.) Then hell shall disappear; there shall be no more punishment, nor temptation, nor sin; life will be an everlasting feast, a Sabbath without end. Then all souls will be united with the Highest Soul, and supplement each other in the Holy of Holies of the Seven Halls (שבע היכלות). Everything will then return to unity and perfection—everything will be united into one idea, which shall be over, and fill the whole universe. The basis of this idea, however (*i.e.*, the light which is concealed in it), will never be fathomed or comprehended; only the idea itself which emanates from it shall be comprehended. In that state the creature will not be distinguished from the Creator, the same idea will illuminate both. Then the soul will rule the universe like God, and what she shall command he will execute. (*Sohar*, i, 45 a and b.)

*V. The Kabbalistic view of the Old Testament, and its relation to Christianity.*

We have already seen that the Kabbalah claims a pre-Adamite existence, and asserts that its mysteries are covertly conveyed in the first four books of the Pentateuch. Those of us who read the Books of Moses, and cannot discover in them any of the above-mentioned doctrines, will naturally ask for the principles of exegesis whereby these secrets are deduced from or rather introduced into the text. These principles are laid down in the following declaration:—“If the Law simply consisted of ordinary expressions and narratives, *e. gr.*, the words of Esau, Hagar, Laban, the ass of Balaam, or of Balaam himself, why should it be called the Law of truth, the perfect Law, the true witness of God? Each word contains a sublime source, each narrative points not only to the single instance in question, but also to generals.” (*Sohar*, iii, 149 b.) “Woe be to the son of man who says that the *Tora* (Pentateuch) contains common sayings

and ordinary narratives.<sup>25</sup> For, if this were the case, we might in the present day compose a code of doctrines from profane writings which should excite greater respect. If the Law contains ordinary matter, then there are nobler sentiments in profane codes. Let us go and make a selection from them, and we shall be able to compile a far superior code.<sup>26</sup> But

25 This view that the mere literal narrative is unworthy of inspiration, and that it must contain a spiritual meaning concealed under the garment of the letter, is not peculiar to the Kabbalah. Both the Synagogue and the Church have maintained the same from time immemorial. Thus the Talmud already describes the impious Manasseh, King of Israel, as making himself merry over the narratives of the Pentateuch and ironically asking (מנשה בן חזקיה שהיה יושב ודורש בהגות של דוסי אמר וכי לא היה לו למשה לכתוב אלא אחת לומר המנע והמנע היה (פלגש לאליפן וליך ראובן בימי קציר החטים וימצא דודאים בשדה), whether Moses could not find anything better to relate than that "Lot's sister was Timna" (Gen. xxxvi, 22); "Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz" (*ibid.*, v. 12); that "Reuben went in the days of the wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field" (*ibid.*, xxx, 14), &c., &c. And it is replied that these narratives contain another sense besides the literal one. (*Sanhedrim*, 99 b.) Hence the rule (כל מה שאירע לאבות) (סימן לבנים), what happened to the fathers is typical of the children.

26 Origen's words are almost literally the same—"Si adsideamus litterae et secundum hoc vel quod Judaeis, vel quod vulgo videtur, accipiamus quae in lege scripta sunt, erubescio dicere et confiteri quia tales leges dederit Deus : videbuntur enim magis elegantes et rationabiles hominum leges, verbi gratia vel Romanorum vel Atheniensium, vel Lacedaemoniorum. *Homil. vii, in Levit.* Again, the same erudite father says, "What person in his senses will imagine that the first, second, and third day, in connection with which morning and evening are mentioned, were without sun, moon and stars, nay that there was no sky on the first day? Who is there so foolish and without common sense as to believe that God planted trees in the garden eastward of Eden like a husbandman, and planted therein the tree of life, perceptible to the eyes and senses, which gave life to the eater thereof; and another tree which gave to the eater thereof a knowledge of good and evil? I believe that everybody must regard these as figures, under which a recondite sense is concealed." *Lib. iv, cap. ii, περί ἀρχῶν.* Huet, *Origeniana*, p. 167. Comp. Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics*, Edinburgh, 1843, p. 99, &c. It must, however, not be supposed that this sort of interpretation, which defies all rules of sound exegesis and common sense, is confined to the ancient Jewish Rabbins or the Christian fathers. The Commentary on Genesis and Exodus by Chr. Wordsworth, D.D., Canon of Westminster, may fairly compete in this respect with any production of bygone days. Will it be believed that Dr. Wordsworth actually sees it "suggested by the Holy Spirit Himself," that Noah drunk, exposing his nakedness, and mocked by his own child, Ham, is typical of Christ who drank the cup of God's wrath, stripped Himself of His heavenly glory, and was mocked by his own children the Jews? But we must give the Canon's own words. "Noah drank the wine of his vineyard; Christ drank the cup of God's wrath, which was the fruit of the sin of the cultivators of the vineyard, which he had planted in the world. Noah was made naked to his shame; Christ consented for our sake to strip Himself of His heavenly glory, and took on him the form of a servant. (Phil. ii, 7.) He laid aside his garments, and washed his disciples' feet. (John, xiii, 4.) He hid not his face from shame and spitting. (Isa. l, 6.) When he was on the Cross, they that passed by reviled Him. (Matt. xxvii, 39.) He was mocked by His



every word of the Law has a sublime sense and a heavenly mystery. . . . Now the spiritual angels had to put on an earthly garment when they descended to this earth ; and if they had not put on such a garment, they could neither have remained nor be understood on the earth. And just as it was with the angels so it is with the Law. When it descended on earth, the Law had to put on an earthly garment to be understood by us, and the narratives are its garment. There are some who think that this garment is the real Law, and not the spirit which it clothed, but these have no portion in the world to come ; and it is for this reason that David prayed, ‘ Open thou mine eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of the Law.’ (Ps. cxix, 18.) What is under the garment of the Law ? There is the garment which every one can see ; and there are foolish people who, when they see a well-dressed man, think of nothing more worthy than this beautiful garment, and take it for the body, whilst the worth of the body itself consists in the soul. The Law too has a body : this is the commandments, which are called the body of the Law. This body is clothed in garments, which are the ordinary narratives. The fools of this world look at nothing else but this garment, which consists of the narratives in the Law ; they do not know any more, and do not understand what is beneath this garment. But those who have more understanding do not look at the garment but at the body beneath it (*i.e.*, the moral) ; whilst the wisest, the servants of the Heavenly King, those who dwell at Mount Sinai, look at nothing else but the soul (*i.e.*, the secret doctrine), which is the root of all the real Law, and these are destined in the world to come to behold the *Soul of this Soul* (*i.e.*, the Deity), which breathes in the Law.” (*Sohar*, iii, 152 a.)

own children, the Jews. He deigned to be exposed to insult for our sakes, in shame and nakedness on the Cross (Heb. xii, 2), in order that we might receive eternal glory from His shame, and be clothed through His weakness with garments of heavenly beauty.” (*Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*, London, 1864, p. 52.)



The opinion that the mysteries of the Kabbalah are to be found in the garment of the Pentateuch is still more systematically propounded in the following parable. "Like a beautiful woman, concealed in the interior of her palace, who when her friend and beloved passes by, opens for a moment a secret window and is seen by him alone, and then withdraws herself immediately and disappears for a long time, so the doctrine only shows herself to the chosen (*i.e.*, to him who is devoted to her with body and soul); and even to him not always in the same manner. At first she simply beckons at the passer-by with her hand, and it generally depends upon his understanding this gentle hint. This is the interpretation known by the name מִצְוָה. Afterwards she approaches him a little closer, lisps him a few words, but her form is still covered with a thick veil, which his looks cannot penetrate. This is the so called מִצְוָה. She then converses with him with her face covered by a thin veil; this is the enigmatic language of the מִצְוָה. After having thus become accustomed to her society, she at last shows herself face to face and entrusts him with the innermost secrets of her heart. This is the secret of the Law, מִצְוָה.<sup>27</sup> He who is thus far initiated in the mysteries

27 The notion that the Bible is to be explained in this fourfold manner was also propounded by the Jewish doctors generally, long before the existence of the Kabbalah (Comp. Ginsburg, *Historical and Critical Commentary on Ecclesiastes*. Longman, 1861, p. 36), and has been adopted by some of the fathers and schoolmen. Origen, although only advocating a threefold sense, viz. :—σώματος, ψυχῆς, πνεύματος, to correspond to the Platonic notion of the component parts of man, viz. :—σῶμα, ψυχή, πνεῦμα, almost uses the same words as the Kabbalah. "The sentiments of Holy Scriptures must be imprinted upon each one's soul in a threefold manner, that the more simple may be built up by the *flesh* (or body) of Scripture, so to speak, by which we mean the obvious explanation; that he who has advanced to a higher state may be edified by the *soul* of Scripture as it were; but he that is perfect, and like to the individuals spoken of by the Apostle (1 Cor. ii, 8, 7), must be edified by the spiritual law, having a shadow of good things to come. *κατὰ ἀρχαῖν*, lib. iv, cap. ii. Comp. Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics*, p. 97. Whilst Nicholas de Lyra, the celebrated commentator and forerunner of the Reformation (born about 1270, died October 23, 1340), distinctly espouses the Jewish four modes of interpretation, which he describes in the following couplet—

"*Littera quæ docet, quæ ostendit Allegoria,  
Moralis quæ agit, quæ vincit analogia.*"

Comp. Alexander's edition of *Wetstein's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, s. v. *LYRA*.

of the *Tora* will understand that all those profound secrets are based upon the simply literal sense, and are in harmony with it; and from this literal sense not a single iota is to be taken and nothing to be added to it." (*Sohar* ii, 99.)

This fourfold sense is gradually disclosed to the initiated in the mysteries of the Kabbalah by the application of definite hermeneutical rules, which chiefly affect the letters composing the words. The most prominent of these canons are—

1. Every letter of a word is reduced to its numerical value, and the word is explained by another of the same quantity. Thus from the words "*Lo! three men stood by him*" (Gen. xviii, 2), it is deduced that these three angels were *Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael*, because *והנה שלשה* and *lo! three men*, and *אלו מיכאל גבריאל ורפאל* *these are Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael*, are of the same numerical value, as will be seen from the following reduction to their numerical value of both these phrases.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \text{ו} & \text{ה} & \text{נ} & \text{ה} & \text{ש} & \text{ל} & \text{ש} & \text{ה} \\
 6 & + & 50 & + & 5 & + & 300 & + & 300 & + & 5 & = & 701 \\
 \\ 
 \text{א} & \text{ל} & \text{ו} & \text{כ} & \text{י} & \text{כ} & \text{א} & \text{ל} \\
 1 & + & 30 & + & 6 & + & 40 & + & 10 & + & 20 & + & 1 & + & 30 & + & 1 \\
 \\ 
 \text{ג} & \text{ב} & \text{ר} & \text{י} & \text{א} & \text{ל} \\
 3 & + & 2 & + & 200 & + & 10 & + & 1 & + & 30 \\
 \\ 
 \text{ו} & \text{ר} & \text{פ} & \text{א} & \text{ל} \\
 6 & + & 200 & + & 80 & + & 1 & = & 701
 \end{array}$$

This rule is called *גמטריא* = *גמטריא* which is a metathesis of the Greek word *γράμμα*, *grammata*, or *grammata*, in the sense of numbers as represented by letters.

2. Every letter of a word is taken as an initial or abbreviation of a word. Thus every letter of the word *בראשית*, the first word in Genesis, is made the initial of a word, and we obtain *בראשית ראה אלזים שיקבלו ישראל תורה* *in the beginning God saw that Israel would accept the Law*. This rule is



denominated **נוטריון** = *notaricun*, from *notarius*, a shorthand writer, one who among the Romans belonged to that class of writers who abbreviated and used single letters to signify whole words.

3. The initial and final letters of several words are respectively formed into separate words. Thus from the beginnings and ends of the words **מי יעלה לנו השמימה** *who shall go up for us to heaven?* (Deut. xxx, 12) are obtained **מילה** *circumcision* and **יהוה** *Jehovah*, and inferred that God ordained circumcision as the way to heaven.

4. Two words occurring in the same verse are joined together and made into one. Thus **מי** *who* and **אלה** *these* are made into **אלהים** *God* by transposing the **י** and **מ**. *Vide supra*, p. 94.<sup>28</sup>

5. The words of those verses which are regarded as containing a peculiar recondite meaning are ranged in squares in such a manner as to be read either vertically or boustrophedonally, beginning at the right or left hand. Again the words of several verses are placed over each other, and the letters which stand under each other are formed into new words. This is especially seen in the treatment of three verses in Exod. xiv, (viz., 19-21), which are believed to

<sup>28</sup> The above-mentioned exegetical canons, however, are not peculiar to the Kabbalah. They have been in vogue among the Jews from time immemorial. Thus the difficult passage in Isa. xxi, 8, **ויקרא אריה** which is rendered in the Authorised Version, *and he cried, A lion!* or '*as a lion*,' as the margin has it, is explained by the ancient Jewish tradition as a prophecy respecting Habakkuk, who, as Isaiah foresaw, would in coming days use the very words here predicted. (Comp. Isa. xxi, 8, 9, with Hab. ii, 1); and this interpretation is obtained by rule i; inasmuch as **אריה** *lion* and **חבקוק** *Habakkuk* are numerically the same, viz.:—

ה	י	ר	א	and	ק	ו	ק	ב	ח											
5	+	10	+	200	+	1	=	216	and	100	+	6	+	100	+	2	+	8	=	216

(See the Commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Kimchi on Isa. xxi, 8.) Again, in the fact that Jacob made Joseph '*a coat of many colours*' (Gen. xxxvii, 3), as the Authorised Version has it, or '*pieces*,' as it is in the margin, the Midrash or the ancient Jewish exposition, sees the sufferings of Joseph indicated; inasmuch as **פסיד** according to rule ii, is composed of the initials of **פוטפאר** *Potiphar*, who imprisoned Joseph; **סוחרים** *merchants* **ישמעאליים** *Ishmaelites* and **מדינים** *Midianites*, who bought him and sold him again as a slave. (Gen. xxxvii, 25-28; xxxix, 1; comp. Rashi on Gen. xxxvii, 3.) For more extensive information on this subject, we must refer to Ginsburg's *Historical and Critical Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Longman, 1861, p. 30, &c.



contain the three Pillars of the *Sephiroth*, and the Divine Name of seventy-two words. The following tables will illustrate this principle of interpretation. The first of these three verses ויסע מלאך האלהים ההלך לפני מהנה ישראל וילך כִּאֲחֵרֵיהֶם ויסע עמוד הענן מפניהם ויעמד כִּאֲחֵרֵיהֶם, and the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them (Exod. xiv, 19), is read boustrophedonally, as follows:—

## I.

ו	א	ל	ש	א	ע	מ	מ
י	ל	ס	ר	ח	ע	ס	ד
ס	ח	נ	א	ר	ס	נ	מ
ע	י	י	ל	י	ו	י	א
מ	ס	מ	י	ח	ד	ח	ח
ל	ח	ח	י	ס	ח	ס	ר
א	ח	נ	ל	ו	ע	ו	י
ך	ל	ח	ך	י	נ		ח
ח	ך	י	מ	ס	ן	ע	ס

The second of these three verses ויבא בן מהנה מצרים ובין מהנה ישראל והי הענן והחשך ויאר את הלילה ולא קרב זה אל זה, and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but gave light by night to these, so that the one came not near the other all the night (Exod. xiv, 20), is in the first place divided, and read from right to left, beginning at the top, as exhibited in the following diagram.

## II.

ח	מ	ן	י	ב	א	ב	י	ו
ב	ו	ס	י	ר	צ	ס	ח	נ
ר	ש	י	ח	נ	ח	ס	ן	י
נ	ע	ח	י	ח	י	ו	ל	א
א	י	ו	ך	ש	ח	ח	ו	ז
ו	ח	ל	י	ל	ח	ח	א	ר
ל	א	ח	ו	ב	ר	ק	א	ל
ח	ל	י	ל	ח	ל	כ	ח	ו

It is then divided in the following manner, and read from left to right, beginning at the bottom.

## III.

ח	כ	ל	ח	ל	י	ל	ח
ק	ר	ב	ו	ח	א	ל	ו
ח	ל	י	ל	ח	ו	ל	א
ש	ך	ו	י	א	ר	א	ח
י	ח	ע	נ	ן	ו	ח	ח
י	ש	ר	א	ל	ו	י	ח
ו	ב	י	ו	מ	ח	נ	ח
ח	נ	ח	מ	צ	ר	י	ס
ו	י	ב	א	ב	י	ו	ס

Whilst the third of these three verses וַיִּשָּׂא מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדוֹ עַל הַיָּם וַיּוֹלֶךְ יְהוָה אֶת הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֹזָה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשָּׂם אֶת הַיָּם לַחֲרֵבָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם, *and Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided* (Exod. xiv. 21), is divided as follows, and read from the right, beginning at the bottom.

## IV.

ס	י	ס	ח	ו	ע	ק	ב	י
ו	ח	ב	ו	ח	ל	ס	י	ח
ח	א	ס	ש	י	ו	ח	ל	י
ל	ח	ל	כ	ח	ו	ע	ס	י
ד	ק	ח	ו	ר	ב	ס	י	ח
ת	א	ח	ו	ח	י	ך	ל	ו
י	ו	ס	י	ח	ל	ע	ו	ד
י	ח	א	ח	ש	ס	ט	י	ו

The three verses which have thus yielded the three Pillars of the *Sephiroth*, are then joined together in groups of three letters in the order in which they are read in diagrams ii, iii, and iv, and they then yield the seventy-two divine names which the Kabbalah assigns to the Deity,<sup>20</sup> as follows :—

<sup>20</sup> The limits of this Essay preclude the possibility of entering into a discussion on the seventy-two Divine names. Those who wish to examine the subject more extensively we must refer to the Commentaries on the *Sohar* (Exod. xiv. 19-21), mentioned in the third part of this Essay ; and to Bartolucci, *Bibliotheca Magna Rabbinica*, Pars iv, p. 280 *seq.*, where ample information is given on this and kindred subjects.



כחה	אבא	ללה	מחש	עלם	סיט	ילי	יהו
Adorandus.	Longanimis.	Annunciatus.	Quasitus.	Salus.	Spes.	Auxiliator.	Exaltator.
הקם	הרי	מבה	יול	ההצ	לאו	אלר	הוי
Advocatus.	Ens.	Sublevator.	Decantatus.	Opportunus.	Exultabundus.		Recordabilis.
חחו	מלה	י	נלך	פהל	לו	כלי	לאו
Expetendus.	Custos.	Dexter.	Fortis.	Ervens.	Exauditor.	Justitia.	Dominator.
ושר	לכב	אוס	ריי	שאה	ירת	האא	נחה
Rector.	Solus.	Adolescentia.	Sanator.	Festinus.	Salvator.	Invocandus.	Mirabilis.
י	רהצ	חעס	אני	מנר	כוכ	להח	יהו
Propulsator.	Adivtor.	Refugium.	Facies.	Gloria.	Deprecatio.	Expectatio.	Cogitabundus.
מיה	עשל	ערי	סאל	ילה	וול	מיר	חהח
Revelator.	Magnificus.	Operator.	Compations.	Doctor.	Matutinus.	Custos.	Liberator.
פוי	מבה	ניח	ננא	עמס	החש	דני	יהו
Erector.	Aeternum.	Regnator.	Verus.	Altissimus.	Lactabundus.	Clemens.	Maximus.
מחי	ענו	יהח	ומב	מצר	הורח	ייל	נסמ
Mercator.	Landabilis.	Amabilis.	Benedictus.	Justus.	Oriens.	Animus.	Protector.
מוס	היי	יבמ	ראה	חבו	אית	מוק	דמב
Requies.	Multus.	Deus.	Premium.	Bonus.	Dator.	Assistens.	Deprecabilis.

6. The letters of words are changed by way of anagram and new words are obtained. This canon is called **תמורה** or **חילוף אותיות**, *permutation*, and the commutation is effected according to fixed rules. Thus the alphabet is bent exactly

in the middle, and one half is put over the other, and by changing alternately the first letter or the first two letters at the beginning of the second line, twenty-two commutations are produced *ex. gr.* :—

11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
											[
											א
											ב
											ג
											ד
											ה
											ו
											ז
											ח
											ט
											י
											כ
											ל
											]
											[
											א
											ב
											ג
											ד
											ה
											ו
											ז
											ח
											ט
											י
											כ
											ל
											]
											or

These anagrammic alphabets obtain their respective names from the first two specimen pairs of letter which indicate the interchange. Thus, for instance, the first is called *Albath* אל"בת from the first words, the second *Abgath* אב"גת, and so on. The following table exhibits the established rules of the alphabetical permutations.

כס	ינ	מס	חצ	וש	וצ	הק	דר	גש	בח	אל	1. ALBATH.
לס	כנ	יס	כיצ	הס	וצ	וק	הר	דש	גח	אכ	2. ABGATH.
בס	לנ	כס	יע	מס	הצ	וק	ור	הש	רח	אנ	3. AGDATH.
מנ	לס	כע	יס	כיצ	הק	ור	וש	הח	בג	אר	4. ADBAG.
גנ	מס	לע	כס	יצ	מק	חר	זש	ות	גר	אה	5. ARBAD.
נס	מע	לס	כצ	יק	מר	חש	זח	גד	בה	או	6. AVBA.
דס	נע	כס	לצ	כק	יר	מש	חת	גה	בו	אז	7. AZBAV.
סע	נס	כצ	לק	כר	יש	מח	דה	גו	בז	אח	8. ACHBAZ.
הע	כס	נצ	מק	לר	כש	ית	דו	גז	בח	אט	9. ATBACH.
עס	סצ	נק	מר	לש	כת	הו	דז	גח	בט	אי	10. AIBAT.
וש	עצ	סק	גר	מש	לח	הז	דח	גכ	בי	אכ	11. ACHBI.
צצ	עק	סר	נש	מח	וז	הח	דט	גי	בכ	אל	12. ALBACH.
וצ	סק	מר	כש	נח	וה	הט	די	גכ	בל	אכ	13. AMBAL.
צק	סר	עש	כת	זח	וט	הי	דכ	גל	במ	אנ	14. ANBAM.
הק	צר	פס	עת	וט	וי	הכ	דל	נכ	בנ	אס	15. ASBAN.
קר	צש	סת	חכ	זי	וכ	הל	דמ	גנ	בס	אע	16. AABAB.
כר	קש	כת	חי	זכ	ול	הט	דג	נכ	בע	אפ	17. AFBA.
רש	קח	כי	זכ	זל	וכ	הנ	דס	נע	כס	אצ	18. AZBAF.
יש	רח	כנ	הל	זמ	ינ	הס	דע	נכ	בצ	אק	19. AXBAZ.
כה	יכ	כיל	חמ	זג	וס	הצ	דס	גצ	בק	אר	20. ARBAK.
כת	יל	ממ	הנ	זס	וע	הט	דצ	נק	בר	אש	21. ASHBAB.
כל	יכו	מנ	הס	זע	זפ	הצ	דק	גר	בש	אח	22. ATHBASH.

To this list is to be added—

שת	קר	סצ	סע	מנ	כל	מי	וח	הז	גר	אנ	23. ABGAD.
כת	יש	מר	חק	וצ	וס	הע	רס	גנ	כס	אל	24. ALBAM.

Besides these canons the Kabbalah also sees a recondite sense in the form of the letters, as well as in the ornaments which adorn them.

As to the relation of the Kabbalah to Christianity, it is maintained that this theosophy propounds the doctrine of the trinity and the sufferings of Messiah. How far this is true may be ascertained from the following passages.<sup>30</sup> "We have already remarked in several places that the daily liturgical declaration about the divine unity is that which is indicated in the Bible (Deut. vi, 43), where *Jehovah* occurs first, then *Elohemu*, and then again *Jehovah*, which three together constitute a unity, and for this reason he [*i.e.*, *Jehovah*] is in the said place called one (אֶחָד). But there are three names, and how can they be one? And although we read one (אֶחָד), are they really one? Now this is revealed by the vision of the Holy Ghost, and when the eyes are closed we get to know that the three are only one. This is also the mystery of the voice. The voice is only one, and yet it consists of three elements, fire [*i.e.*, warmth], air [*i.e.*, breath], and water [*i.e.*, humidity], yet are all these one in the mystery of the voice, and can only be one. Thus also *Jehovah*, *Elohemu*, and *Jehovah* constitute one---three forms which are one. And this is indicated by the voice which man raises [*i.e.*, at prayer], thereby to comprehend spiritually the most perfect unity of the *En Soph* for the finite, since all the three [*i.e.*, *Jehovah*, *Elohemu*, *Jehovah*] are read with the same loud voice, which comprises in itself a trinity. And this is the daily confession of the divine unity which, as a mystery, is revealed by the Holy Ghost. This unity has been explained

[illegible]



in different ways, yet he who understands it in this way is right, and he who understands it in another way is also right. The idea of unity, however formed by us here below, from the mystery of the audible voice which is one, explains the thing." (*Sohar*, ii, 48 b.)

On another occasion we are informed that R. Eleazar, whilst sitting with his father R. Simeon, was anxious to know how the two names, *Jehovah* and *Elohim*, can be interchanged, seeing that the one denotes *mercy* and the other *judgment*. Before giving the discussion between the father and the son, it is necessary to remark that whenever the two divine names, Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) and Jehovah (יְהוָה), immediately follow each other, *Jehovah* is pointed and read (יְהוָה) *Elohim*. The reason of this, as it is generally supposed, is to avoid the repetition of Adonai, Adonai, since the Tetragrammaton is otherwise always pointed and read (יְהוָה). The Kabbalah, however, as we shall see, discovers in it a recondite meaning.<sup>31</sup> "R. Eleazar, when sitting before his father R. Simeon, said to him, we have been taught that whenever *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) occurs, it denotes *justice*. Now how can *Elohim* sometimes be put for *Jehovah*, as is the case in those passages wherein Adonai (אֲדֹנָי) and Jehovah (יְהוָה) stand together (Comp. Gen. xv, 8; Ezek. ii, 4, &c.), seeing that the latter denotes *mercy* in all the passages in which it occurs? To which he replied, Thus it is said in the Scripture, 'Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart, that *Jehovah* is *Elohim*' (Deut. iv, 19); and again it is written '*Jehovah* is *Elohim*.' (*Ibid.*, ver. 35.) Whereupon he [*i.e.*, the son] said, I know this forsooth, that justice is sometimes tempered with

אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה וְכָל יוֹמָא דְאֵתְנָלִי בְּרֹחַ דְּרוּחַ קְדָשָׁא וְכַמְדָּא בְּוֹנֵן דִּיחֻדָּא אֲחֵצְרוּ וְכַלְהוּ קְשׁוּשׁ מֵאֵן רַעֲבִיד  
הָאֵין עֲבִיד וּמֵאֵן רַעֲבִיד הָאֵין עֲבִיד אֲבָל הָאֵין יְחֻדָּא דְקָא אֵין מִתְצַר מִתְחַת בְּרֹחַ דְּקוֹל דְּאֵיחֵר חָדָא  
וְהָאֵין בְּרֹחַ דְּמִלְחָא וְהָאֵין חֶלֶק בִּי דִּין בִּי בִי

31 רַבִּי אֱלֵעָזָר חָזַק יְתִיב קְמוּצָא דְרַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אֲבִי אֱלֵעָזָר בְּבֵל אֲחֵר דִּינָא הָאֵין יוֹדֵד וְהָאֵין  
וְהָאֵין אֵין אֲחֵר דְּאֵקְרִי אֱלֹהִים כְּגוֹן אֲדָנִי יְהוָה אֲמַר אֲקָרִי אֱלֹהִים וְהָאֵין אֲחֵר דְּאֵקְרִי אֱלֹהִים כְּגוֹן אֲדָנִי יְהוָה  
אֲמַר לֵיחַ חֲכֵם הָאֵין כְּתִיב בְּקָרָא דְכְּתִיב וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשְׁבוֹתָ אֵל לִבְנֵךָ כִּי יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים  
וְכְתִיב יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֲמַר לֵיחַ מֵלֵךְ דָּא יִרְשָׁא דְבִשְׁמֵר דְּאֵין דִּינָא אֵין דְּאֵין לְוִסְמָא בְּאֵתֵר דְּאֵין

mercy and mercy with justice. Quoth he [*i.e.*, the father], Come and see that it is so ; Jehovah indeed does signify mercy whenever it occurs, but when through sin mercy is changed into justice, then it is written Jehovah (יהוה), but read *Elohim* (אלהים). Now come and see the mystery of the word [*i.e.*, Jehovah]. There are three degrees, and each degree exists by itself [*i.e.*, in the Deity], although the three together consitute one, they are closely united into one and are inseparable from each other." (*Sohar*, iii, 65 a.)

We shall only give one more passage bearing on the subject of the Trinity.<sup>32</sup> "He who reads the word (אחד) *One* [*i.e.*, in the declaration of the divine unity שמע] must pronounce *the Aleph* (א) quickly, shorten its sound a little, and not pause at all by this letter, and he who obeys this, his life will be lengthened. Whereupon they [*i.e.*, the disciples] said to him [*i.e.*, to R. Ilai], he [*i.e.*, R. Simeon] has said, There are two, and one is connected with them, and they are three ; but in being three they are one. He said to them, those two names, Jehovah Jehovah, are in the declaration 'Hear O Israel' (Deut. vi, 4), and *Eloheinu* (אלהינו), between them, is united with them as the third, and this is the conclusion which is sealed with the impression of *Truth* (אמת). But when these three are combined into a unity, they are one in a single unity." (*Sohar*, iii, 262 a.) Indeed one Codex of the *Sohar* had the following remark on the words "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. iv, 3) ; קדוש זה אב קדוש זה בן קדוש זה רוח הקדוש, *the first holy refers to the Holy Father ; the second to the Holy Son ; and the third to the Holy*

רחמי אית דינא אמר ליה תא חזי דהכי הוא דר"ד בכל אתר רחמי ובשעתא דמהפכי חייביא רחמי לדינא כדן כתיב יהוה וקרין ליה אלהים, אבל תא חזי רוא דמלה ג' דרגין אינון וכל דרגא ודרגא בלחודוי ואעג' דכלא חד ומתקשרי בחד ולא מתפרשי דא מן דא : וזהר הלך ג' דף ס"ה א'

32 מאן דאמר אחד מצטרף לחטפא אל"ף ולקצרא קריאה דילח ולא יעכב בהאי אות כלל. ומאן דעביד דא יתארכון חייזו אמרו ליה תו אמר תרין אינון וחדא אשתתף בהו ואינון תלתא וכד הו תלתא אינון חד. אמר לון אלץ תרין שמדון דשמע ישראל דאינון יהוה יהוה אלהינו אשתתף בהו ואיהו חותמא דגושטקא אמת. וכד מתחברן כחדא אינון חד ביהודא חדא : וזהר הלך ג' דף קס"ב א'







each one of us as members of the body." (*Sohar*, iii, 218 a.) To the same effect is the following passage.<sup>36</sup> "Those souls which tarry in the nether garden of Eden hover about the world, and when they see suffering or patient martyrs and those who suffer for the unity of God, they return and mention it to the Messiah. When they tell the Messiah of the afflictions of Israel in exile, and that the sinners among them do not reflect in order to know their Lord, he raises his voice and weeps because of those sinners, as it is written, 'he is wounded for our transgressions.' (Isa. liii, 5.) Whereupon those souls return and take their place. In the garden of Eden there is one palace which is called the palace of the sick. The Messiah goes into this palace and invokes all the sufferings, pain, and afflictions of Israel to come upon him, and they all come upon him. Now if he did not remove them thus and take them upon himself, no man could endure the sufferings of Israel, due as punishment for transgressing the Law; as it is written—'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, &c. (Isa. liii, 4, with Rom. xii, 8, 4.) When the children of Israel were in the Holy Land they removed all those sufferings and afflictions from the world by their prayers and sacrifices, but now the Messiah removes them from the world." (*Sohar*, ii, 212 b.)

That these opinions favour, to a certain extent, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, though not in the orthodox sense, is not only admitted by many of the Jewish literati who are adverse to the Kabbalah, but by some of its

36 אנון נשמתן דבנחמא דערן לחמא . . . משמשי ומסתכלן באינון מאריהון דכאבין ובני מרעין ואנון דטבלין על ידווא דמאריהון ותאבין ואמרין ליה למשיחא בשעתא דאמרין ליה למשיחא צערא דישאל בנלותהון ואינון חייבין די בהון דלא מסתכלי למנדע למאריהון אריס קלא ובני על אינון חייבין דבהו דה"ר והוא מחולל כמשפיעו מדוכא מצונותינו . חייבין אינון נשמתן וקיימין באחרייהו . בנחמא דערן אית דיכלא דרא דאקרי דיכלא דבני מרעין' כדן משיחא עאל בדהו דיכלא וקארי לכל מרעין וכל כאבין כל יסוריהון דישאל דיתון עליה וכלתו אחין עליה . ואלמלא דהיו אקיל מצליהו דישאל ונביל עליה' לא היו בר נש דיכול למסבל יסוריהון דישאל על עונשי דאוריהו . דה"ר אמן חלייני הוא נשא ונו' . . . כד היו ישראל בארעא קדשא באינון מלחמין וקרבנין דהו עבדי הו כוסלקין כל אינון מרעין ויסורין מעלמא . השתא משיחא כוסלק לון כיבני עלמא : ודור חלק ב' דף ריב א'

friends. Indeed, the very fact that so large a number of Kabbalists have from time to time embraced the Christian faith would of itself show that there must be some sort of affinity between the tenets of the respective systems. Some of these converts occupied the highest position in the Synagogue, both as pious Jews and literary men. We need only specify Paul Ricci, physician to the Emperor Maximilian I; Julius Conrad Otto, author of *The Unveiled Secrets* (גללא רזיא), consisting of extracts from the *Talmud* and the *Sohar*, to prove the validity of the Christian doctrine (Nürenberg, 1805); John Stephen Rittengal, grandson of the celebrated Don Isaac Abravanel, and translator of *The Book Jetzira*, or of *Creation* (ספר יצירה), into Latin (Amsterdam, 1642); and Jacob Frank, the great apostle of the Kabbalah in the eighteenth century, whose example in professing Christianity was followed by several thousands of his disciples.<sup>37</sup> The testimony of these distinguished Kabbalists, which they give in their elaborate works, about the affinity of some of the doctrines of this theosophy with those of Christianity, is by no means to be slighted; and this is fully corroborated by the celebrated Leo di Modena, who, as an orthodox Jew, went so far as to question whether God will ever forgive those who printed the Kabbalistic works.<sup>38</sup>

The use made by some well-meaning Christians of the above-named Kabbalistic canons of interpretation, in controversies with Jews, to prove that the doctrines of Christianity are concealed under the letter of the Old Testament, will now be deprecated by every one who has any regard for the laws of language. As a literary curiosity, however, we shall give one or two specimens. No less a person than the celebrated

37 Comp. Peter Beer, *Geschichte der religiösen Secten der Juden*. Berlin, 1822-23, vol. ii, p. 309, &c.

38 ולא ידעתי אם יכחול "לאשר הדפיסים אותם הספרים" Comp. אר נודה ed. Fürst, Leipzig, 1840, p. 7.

Reuchlin would have it that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the first verse of Genesis. He submits, if the Hebrew word ברא, which is translated *created*, be examined, and if each of the three letters composing this word be taken as the initial of a separate word, we obtain the expressions בן רוח אב *Son, Spirit, Father*, according to Rule 2 (p. 131). Upon the same principle this erudite scholar deduces the first two persons in the Trinity from the words—"the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" (Ps. cxviii, 22), by dividing the three letters composing the word אבן *stone*, into אב בן *Father, Son* (Comp. *De Verbo mirifico*, Basel, 1494). In more recent times we find it maintained that the '*righteousness*' spoken of in Daniel ix, 24, means *the Anointed of Jehovah*, because the original phrase, צדק עלמים is by Gematria, = numerical value, (which is Rule 1, given above, p. 131), the same as משיח יהוה. So pleased is the author with this discovery, that he takes great care to remark—"It is a proof which I believe has hitherto escaped the notice of interpreters." Such proofs, however, of the Messiaship of Christ bring no honour to our religion; and in the present day argue badly both against him who adduces them and against him who is convinced by them.



## II.

WE now proceed to trace the date and origin of the Kabbalah. Taking the *ex parte* statement for what it is worth, viz., that this secret doctrine is of a pre-Adamite date, and that God himself propounded it to the angels in Paradise, we shall have to examine the age of the oldest documents which embody its tenets, and compare these doctrines with other systems, in order to ascertain the real date and origin of this theosophy. But before this is done, it will be necessary to summarize, as briefly as possible, those doctrines which are peculiar to the Kabbalah, or which it expounds and elaborates in an especial manner, and which constitute it a separate system within the precincts of Judaism. The doctrines are as follow :—

1. God is boundless in his nature. He has neither will, intention, desire, thought, language, nor action. He cannot be grasped and depicted; and, for this reason, is called *En Soph*, and as such he is in a certain sense not existent.

2. He is not the direct creator of the universe, since he could not will the creation; and since a creation proceeding directly from him would have to be as boundless and as perfect as he is himself.

3. He at first sent forth ten emanations, or *Sephiroth*, which are begotten, not made, and which are both infinite and finite.

4. From these *Sephiroth*, which are the Archetypal Man, the different worlds gradually and successively evolved. These evolutionary worlds are the brightness and the express image of their progenitors, the *Sephiroth*, which uphold all things.

5. These emanations, or *Sephiroth*, gave rise to or created in their own image all human souls. These souls are pre-existent, they occupy a special hall in the upper world of spirits, and there already decide whether they will pursue a good or bad course in their temporary sojourn in the human body, which is also fashioned according to the Archetypal image.

6. No one has seen the *En Soph* at any time. It is the *Sephiroth*, in whom the *En Soph* is incarnate, who have revealed themselves to us, and to whom the anthropomorphisms of Scripture and the *Hagada* refer. Thus when it is said, "God spake, descended upon earth, ascended into heaven, smelled the sweet smell of sacrifices, repented in his heart, was angry," &c., &c., or when the Hagadic works describe the body and the mansions of the Deity, &c., all this does not refer to the *En Soph*, but to these intermediate beings.

7. It is an absolute condition of the soul to return to the Infinite Source whence it emanated, after developing all those perfections the germs of which are indelibly inherent in it. If it fails to develop these germs, it must migrate into another body, and in case it is still too weak to acquire the virtues for which it is sent to this earth, it is united to another and a stronger soul, which, occupying the same human body with it, aids its weaker companion in obtaining the object for which it came down from the world of spirits.

8. When all the pre-existent souls shall have passed their probationary period here below, the restitution of all things will take place; Satan will be restored to an angel of light, hell will disappear, and all souls will return into the bosom of the Deity whence they emanated. The creature shall not then be distinguished from the Creator. Like God, the soul will rule the universe: she shall command, and God obey.

With these cardinal doctrines before us we shall now be

able to examine the validity of the Kabbalists' claims to the books which, according to them, propound their doctrines and determine the origin of this theosophy. Their works are I. *The Book of Creation*; II. *The Sohar*; and III. *The Commentary of the Ten Sephiroth*. As the *Book of Creation* is acknowledged by all parties to be the oldest, we shall examine it first.

### I. *The Book of Creation or Jetzira.*

This marvellous and famous document pretends to be a monologue of the patriarch Abraham, and premises that the contemplations it contains are those which led the father of the Hebrews to abandon the worship of the stars and to embrace the faith of the true God. Hence the remark of the celebrated philosopher, R. Jehudah Ha-Levi (born about 1086)—“The Book of the Creation, which belongs to our father Abraham, . . . demonstrates the existence of the Deity and the Divine Unity, by things which are on the one hand manifold and multifarious, whilst on the other hand they converge and harmonize; and this harmony can only proceed from One who originated it.”<sup>1</sup> (*Khozari*, iv. 25.) The whole Treatise consists of six *Perakim* (פרקים) or chapters, subdivided into thirty-three very brief *Mishnas* (משנות) or sections, as follows. The first chapter has twelve sections, the second has five, the third five, the fourth four, the fifth three, and the sixth four sections. The doctrines which it propounds are delivered in the style of aphorisms or theorems, and, pretending to be the dicta of Abraham, are laid down very dogmatically, in a manner becoming the authority of this patriarch.

As has already been intimated, the design of this treatise is to exhibit a system whereby the universe may be viewed methodically in connection with the truths given in the Bible,

1 ספר יצירה והוא לאברהם . . . הורה על אלהותו ואחדותו בדברים מתחלפים מתרבים מצד אגל הם מתאחדים נסכמים מצד אחר והסכמתם מצד האחר אשר יסדרם מהם: כזורי מאמר רביעי כ"ה



thus shewing, from the gradual and systematic development of the creation, and from the harmony which prevails in all its multitudinous component parts, that One God produced it all, and that He is over all. The order in which God gave rise to this creation out of nothing (יצר ממש מתוהו), and the harmony which pervades all the constituent parts of the universe are shown by the analogy which subsists between the visible things and the signs of thought, or the means whereby wisdom is expressed and perpetuated among men. Since the letters have no absolute value, nor can they be used as mere forms, but serve as the medium between essence and form, and like words, assume the relation of form to the real essence, and of essence to the embryo and unexpressed thought, great value is attached to these letters, and to the combinations and analogies of which they are capable. The patriarch Abraham, therefore, employs the double value of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet;<sup>2</sup> he uses them, both in their phonetic nature and in their sacred character, as expressing the divine truths of the Scriptures. But, since the Hebrew alphabet is also used as numerals, which are represented by the fundamental number *ten*, and since the vowels of the language are also *ten* in number, this decade is added to the twenty-two letters, and these two kinds of signs—*i.e.*, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet and the ten fundamental numbers—are designated *the thirty-two ways of secret wisdom*; and the treatise opens with the declaration<sup>3</sup>—“By thirty-two paths of secret wisdom, the Eternal, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, the living God, the King of the Universe, the Merciful and Gracious, the High and Exalted God, He who inhabiteth eternity, Glorious and Holy is His

2 It is for this reason that the *Book Jetzira* is also called אורח דאברהם אבינו *the Letters or Alphabet of the Patriarch Abraham*.

3 בשלשים ושנים פליאות חכמה חקק יה יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל אלהים חיים ומלך עולם אל רחום וחנון רם ונשא שוכן עד מרום וקדוש שמו בשלשה ספרים בספר וספר וסיפור : ספר יצירה סק' א' משנה א'

name, hath created the world by means of (ספר) numbers, (ספור) phonetic language, and writing (ספר)." (*Sepher Jetzira*, chapter i; *Mishna* i.)

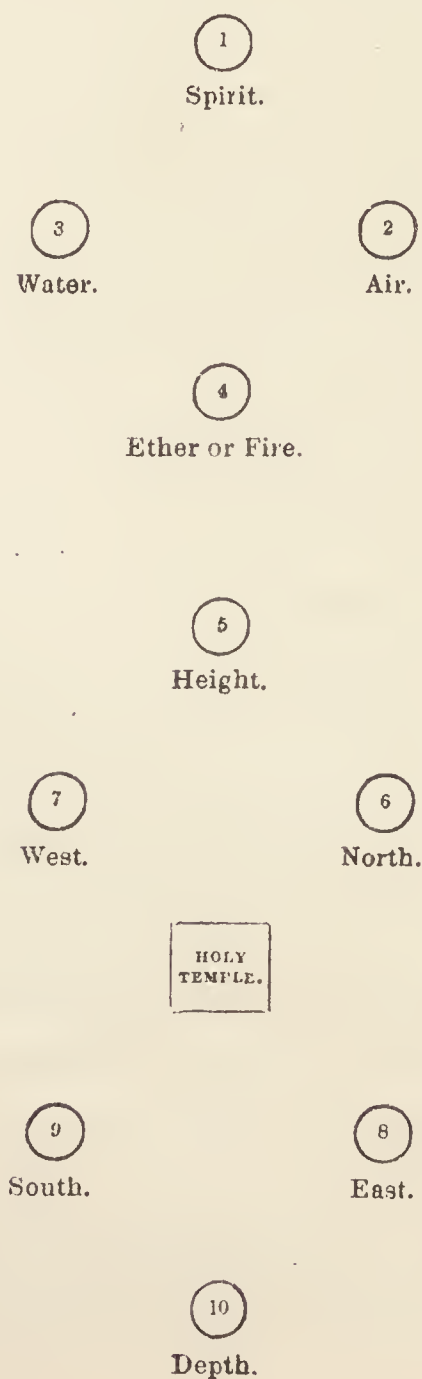
First of all comes the fundamental number ten. This decade is divided into a tetrad and hexade, and thereby is shown the gradual development of the world out of nothing. At first there existed nothing except the Divine Substance, with the creative idea and the articulate creative word as the Spirit or the Holy Spirit, which is one with the Divine Substance and indivisible. Hence, the Spirit of the living God (רוח אלהים חיים) stands at the head of all things and is represented by the number *one*. "One is the spirit of the living God, blessed be His name, who liveth for ever! voice, spirit, and word, this is the Holy Ghost." (Chapter i, *Mishna* ix). From this Spirit the whole universe proceeded in gradual and successive emanations, in the following order. The creative *air*, represented by number *two*, emanated from the Spirit (רוח מרוח). "In it He engraved the twenty-two letters." The *water* again, represented by the number *three*, proceeded from the air (מים מרוח). "In it He engraved darkness and emptiness, slime and dung." Whilst the *ether* or *fire*, represented by the number *four*, emanated from the water (אש ממים). "In it He engraved the throne of His glory, the Ophanim, the Seraphim, the sacred animals, and the ministering angels, and from these three he formed His habitation; as it is written—'He maketh the wind his messengers, flaming fire his servants'"<sup>5</sup> (Cap. i. *Mish.* ix, x.) These intermediate members between the Creator and the created world sustain a *passive* and *created* relationship to God, and

4 אחת רוח אלהים חיים ברוך ומבורך שמו של חי העולמים קול ורוח ודיבור וזה רוח הקדוש; פרק א' משנה ט'

5 שתיים רוח מרוח חקק וחצב בה עשרים ושתיים אותיות יסוד שלש אמות ושבעה כפולות ושנים עשר פשוטות ורוח אחת מהן: שלש מים מרוח חקק וחצב בהן תהו ובהו רפס ושיט חקקן כמין ערוגה חציבן כמין חומה סככן כמין מצויבה: ארבע אש ממים חקק וחצב בה כסא הכבוד ואופנים ושרפים וחיות הקדש ומלאכי השרת ומשלשתן יסוד מעונו שנאמר עשה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש ליהם: פרק א' משנה ט' וי'

*an acting and creating* relationship to the world ; so that God is neither in immediate connection with the created and material universe, nor is His creative fiat hindered by matter.

Then comes the hexade, each unit of which represents space in the six directions (שש קצוות), or the four corners of the world, east, west, north, and south, as well as height and depth which emanated from the ether, and in the centre of which is the Holy Temple supporting the whole (והיכל הקודש מכון באמצע). The position of the decade is therefore as follows—





These constitute the primordial ten, from which the whole universe proceeded.

And lastly follow "the twenty-two letters, by means of which God, having drawn, hewn, and weighed them, and having variously changed and put them together, formed the souls of everything that has been made, and that shall be made."<sup>6</sup> (Chapter ii, *Mishna* ii.) These twenty-two letters of the alphabet are then divided into three groups, consisting respectively of, 1, *the three mothers, or fundamental letters* (שלש אמות), 2, *seven double* (שבע כפולות) and 3, *twelve simple consonants* (שנים עשר פשוטות), to deduce therefrom a triad of elements, a heptade of opposites, and a duodecimo of simple things, in the following manner.

### 1. THREE MOTHERS, ALEPH, MEM, SHIN. שלש אמות אמ"ש

The above-named three primordial elements, viz., ether, water and air, which were as yet partially ideal and ethereal, became more concrete and palpable in the course of emanation. Thus the fire developed itself into the visible heaven, the elementary water thickened into the earth, embracing sea and land, whilst the elementary air became the atmospheric air. These constitute the three fundamental types of the universe (שלש אמות בעולם). The three primordial elements also thickened still more in another direction, and gave birth to a new order of creatures, which constitute the course of the year and the temperatures. From the ether developed itself heat, from the water emanated cold, and from the air proceeded the mild temperature which shows itself in the rain or wet. These constitute the fundamental points of the year (שלש אמות בשנה). Whereupon the three primordial elements developed themselves in another direction again, and gave rise to the human organism. The ether sent forth the human head, which is the seat of intelligence; the water gave

6 עשרים ושנים אותיות יסוד חקקן חצבן שקלן והמירן צרפן צר בהם גפש כל היצור וגפש כל העתיר לצור : פרה שני שנה ב'

rise to the body, or the abdominal system; whilst the air, which is the central element, developed itself into the genital organ. These three domains, viz., the macrocosm, the revolution of time, and the microcosm, which proceeded from the three primordial elements, are exhibited by the three letters *Aleph* (א), *Mem* (מ) and *Shin* (ש.) Hence it is said that by means of these three letters—which, both in their phonetic and sacred character, represent the elements, inasmuch as א, as a gentle aspirate, and as the initial of אֵיר *air*, symbolises THE AIR; מ, as a labial or mute, and as the initial of מַי *water*, represents THE WATER; whilst ש, as a sibilant, and as the last letter of שֵׁר *fire*, typifies THE FIRE (Chapter iii, *Mishna* iii)—God created

*In the World*—The Fire, Water, Air.

*In Man*—The Head, Body, Breast.

*In the Year*—Heat, Cold, Wet.

2. SEVEN DOUBLE CONSONANTS—BETH, GIMEL, DALETH, CAPH, PE, RESH, TAU שבע כפולות בגדכפרת

The three dominions proceeding from the triad of the primordial elements which emanated from the unity continued to develop themselves still further. In the macrocosm were developed the seven planets, in time the seven days, and in the microcosm the seven sensuous faculties. These are represented by the seven double consonants of the alphabet. Hence it is said that by means of these seven letters, which are called double because they have a double pronunciation, being sometimes aspirated and sometimes not, according to their being with or without the *Dagesh*, God created—

*In the World*—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon.

*In Man*—Wisdom, Riches, Dominion, Life, Favour, Progeny, Peace.

*In the Year*—Sabbath, Thursday, Tuesday, Sunday, Friday, Wednesday, Monday.

Owing to the opposite = double pronunciation of these seven letters, being hard and soft, they are also the symbols of the seven opposites (תמורות) in which human life moves, viz., wisdom and ignorance, riches and poverty, fruitfulness and barrenness, life and death, liberty and bondage, peace and war, beauty and deformity. Moreover, they correspond to the seven ends (שבע קצוות), above and below, east and west, north and south, and the Holy Place in the centre, which supports them; and with them God formed the seven heavens, the seven earths or countries, the seven weeks from the feast of Passover to Pentecost. (Chapter iii, *Mishna*, i-v; cap. iv, *Mishna*, i-iii.)

### 3. TWELVE SIMPLE CONSONANTS שתיים עשר פשוטות.

The three dominions then respectively developed themselves into twelve parts, the macrocosm into the twelve signs of the Zodiac, time into twelve months, and the microcosm into twelve active organs. This is shown by the twelve simple consonants of the alphabet. Thus it is declared, that by means of the twelve letters, which are הוה חטי לן סעצק, God created the twelve signs of the Zodiac, viz.:—

*In the World*—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, Pisces.

*In Man*—The organs of Sight, Hearing, Smelling, Talking, Taste, Copulating, Dealing, Walking, Thinking, Anger, Laughter, Sleeping.

*In the Year*—The twelve months, viz., Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tamus, Ab, Elul, Tishri, Cheshvan, Kislev, Tebet, Shebat, Adar. (Comp. chapter v, *Mishna* i.)

The three dominions continued gradually to develop into that infinite variety of objects which is perceptible in each. This infinite variety, proceeding from the combination of a few, is propounded by means of the great diversity of combinations and permutations of which the whole alphabet is capable.



These letters, small in number, being only twenty-two, by their power of *combination* and *transposition*, yield an endless number of words and figures, and thus become the types of all the varied phenomena in the creation.<sup>7</sup> “Just as the twenty-two letters yield two hundred and thirty-one types by combining *Aleph* (א) with all the letters, and all the letters with *Aleph*; *Beth* (ב), with all the letters, and all the letters with *Beth*, so all the formations and all that is spoken proceed from one name.” (Chapter ii, *Mishna*, iv.) The table on the opposite page will shew how the two hundred and thirty-one types are obtained by the combination of the twenty-two letters.

The infinite variety in creation is still more strikingly exhibited by permutations, of which the Hebrew alphabet is capable, and through which an infinite variety of types is obtained. Hence the remark<sup>8</sup>—“Two letters form two houses, three letters build six houses, four build twenty-four, five build a hundred and twenty houses, six build seven hundred and twenty houses; and from thenceforward go out and think what the mouth cannot utter and the ear cannot hear.” (Chapter iv, *Mishna* iv.) The following table will show how the letters, by permutation, will yield an infinite variety.

TABLE OF PERMUTATION.

a. Two letters	b. Three letters	c. Four letters			
אב 1.	אבג 1.	אבגד 19.	אבגד 13.	אבגד 7.	אבגד 1.
בא 2.	אבג 2.	אבגד 20.	אבגד 14.	אבגד 8.	אבגד 2.
	באג 3.	אבגד 21.	אבגד 15.	אבגד 9.	אבגד 3.
	בגא 4.	אבגד 22.	אבגד 16.	אבגד 10.	אבגד 4.
	גאב 5.	אבגד 23.	אבגד 17.	אבגד 11.	אבגד 5.
	גבא 6.	אבגד 24.	אבגד 18.	אבגד 12.	אבגד 6.
form one.	build six.	build twenty-four.			

7 כיצד שקלן והמירן אלף עם כולם וכולם עם אלף/ בית עם כולם וכולם עם בית וחזרת חלילה נמצא כל היצור וכל הדבור יוצא בשם אחד: פרק שני משנה ד'  
8 שתי אותיות בונות שתי בתים שלושה בונות ששה בתים ארבעה בונות ארבע ועשרים בתים חמש בונות מאה ועשרים בתים שש בונות שבע מאות ועשרים בתים מכאן ואילך צא וחשוב מה שאין תזהר יכולה לדבר ואף האוזן יכולה לשמוע: פרק ד' משנה ד'



In order to ascertain how often a certain number of letters can be transposed, the product of the preceding number must be multiplied with it. Thus—

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Letter } 2 \times 1 &= 2 \\
 3 \times 2 &= 6 \\
 4 \times 6 &= 24 \\
 5 \times 24 &= 120 \\
 6 \times 120 &= 720 \\
 7 \times 720 &= 5040 \text{ and so on.}
 \end{aligned}$$

Accordingly, the material form of the spirit, represented by the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, is the form of all existing beings. Apart from the three dominions, the macrocosm, time, and microcosm, it is only the Infinite who can be perceived, and of whom this triad testifies; for which reason it is denominated “the three true witnesses.”<sup>9</sup> Each of this triad, notwithstanding its multifariousness, constitutes a system, having its own centre and dominion.<sup>10</sup> Just as God is the centre of the universe, the heavenly dragon is the centre of the macrocosm; the foundation of the year is the revolution of the Zodiac; whilst the centre of the microcosm is the heart.<sup>11</sup> The first is like a king on his throne, the second is like a king living among his subjects, and the third is like a king in war. The reason why the heart of man is like a monarch in the midst of war is, that the twelve principal organs of the human body<sup>12</sup> “are arrayed against each other in battle array; three serve love, three hatred, three engender life, and three death. The three engendering love are the heart, the ears and the mouth; the three for enmity are the

9 עדים נאמנים עולם שנה נפש: פרק ו' משנה א'

10 אחד על גבי שלשה שלשה על גבי שבעה שבעה על גבי שנים עשר וכולן אדוקין זה בזה: פרק ו' משנה ג'

11 חלי בעולם כמלך על כסאו גלגל בשנה כמלך במדינה לב בנפש כמלך במלחמה

12 שנים עשר עומדים במלחמה שלשה אהבים שלשה שנאים שלשה מחיים שלשה ממיתים שלשה אהבים הלב והאזניים והפה שלשה שונאים הנבר המרה והלשון ואל מלך נאמן מושל בכולן אחד על גבי שלשה שלשה על גבי שבעה שבעה על גבי שנים עשר וכולן אדוקין זה בזה: פרק ו' משנה ג'



liver, the gall and the tongue ; but God, the faithful King, rules over all the three systems. One [*i.e.*, God] is over the three, the three are over the seven, the seven over the twelve, and all are internally connected with each other." (Chapter vi, *Mishna* iii.) Thus the whole creation is one connected whole ; it is like a pyramid pointed at the top, which was its beginning, and exceedingly broad in its basis, which is its fullest development in all its multitudinous component parts. Throughout the whole are perceptible two opposites, with a reconciling medium. Thus, in the macrocosm, "the ethereal fire is above, the water below, and the air is between these hostile elements to reconcile them." (Chapter vi, *Mishna* i.) The same is the case in the heaven, earth and the atmosphere, as well as in the microcosm. But all the opposites in the cosmic, telluric and organic spheres, as well as in the moral world, are designed to balance each other. "God has placed in all things one to oppose the other ; good to oppose evil, good proceeding from good, and evil from evil ; good purifies evil, and evil purifies good ; good is in store for the good, and evil is reserved for the evil." (Chapter vi, *Mishna* ii.)

From this analysis of its contents it will be seen that *the Book Jetzira*, which the Kabbalists claim as their oldest document, has really nothing in common with the cardinal doctrines of the Kabbalah. There is not a single word in it bearing on *the En Soph*, the Archetypal Man, the speculations about the being and nature of the Deity, and *the Sephiroth*, which constitute the essence of the Kabbalah. Even its treatment of the ten digits, as part of the thirty-two ways of wisdom whereby God created the universe, which has undoubtedly suggested to the authors of the Kabbalah the idea of the *ten Sephiroth*, is quite different from the mode in which the Kabbalistic *Sephiroth* are depicted, as may be seen from a most cursory comparison of the respective diagrams which we have given to illustrate the plans of the two systems.

Besides the language of *the Book Jetzira* and the train of ideas therein enunciated, as the erudite Zunz rightly remarks, shew that this treatise belongs to *the Geonim* period, *i.e.*, about the ninth century of the Christian era, when it first became known.<sup>13</sup> The fabrication of this pseudograph was evidently suggested by the fact that the Talmud mentions some *treatises on the Creation*, denominated **הלכות יצירה** and **ספר יצירה** (*Sanhedrim* 65 *b* ; 67 *b*) which “R. Chanina and R. Oshaja studied every Friday, whereby they produced a calf three years old and ate it;”<sup>14</sup> and whereby R. Joshua ben Chananja declared he could take fruit and instantly produce the trees which belong to them. (*Jerusalem Sanhedrim*, cap. vii. *ad finem*.<sup>15</sup>) Indeed Dr. Chwolson of Petersburg has shown in his treatise “*on the Remnants of the ancient Babylonian Literature in Arabic translations*,” that the ancient Babylonians laid it down as a maxim that if a man were minutely and carefully to observe the process of nature, he would be able to imitate nature and produce sundry creatures. He would not only be able to create plants and metals, but even living beings. These artificial productions the Babylonians call **תולידאת** *productions* or **אבונאת** *formations*. Gutami, the author of the *Agricultura Nabat*, who lived about 1400 B.C., devoted a long chapter to the doctrine of artificial productions. The ancient sorcerer Ankebuta declares, in his work on artificial productions, that he created a man, and shows how he did it; but he confesses that the human being was without language and reason, that he could not eat, but simply opened and closed his eyes. This and many other fragments adds R—, from whose communication we quote, show that there were many works in Babylon which

13 *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*. Berlin, 1832, p. 165, &c.

14 רב חנינה ורב אושעיא דכל מעלי שבתא הוו עסקי בהלכות יצירה ומיגרי להו עיגלא חילתא ואכלי לי: סנהדרין ס"ו ב'

15 אמר ר' יהושע בן חנניא יביל אנא על ידי ספר יצירה נסיב קחין ואבשיחין ועבדילון איילין שבין והידנן עבדון איילין ומבין:



treated on the artificial productions of plants, metals, and living beings, and that the *Book Jetzira*, mentioned in the Talmud, was most probably such a Babylonian document."<sup>16</sup>

As the document on creation, mentioned in the Talmud, was lost in the course of time, the author of the Treatise which we have analysed tried to supply the loss, and hence not only called his production by the ancient name ספר יצירה *the Book of Creation*, but ascribed it to the patriarch Abraham. The perusal, however, of a single page of this book will convince any impartial reader that it has as little in common with the magic work mentioned in the Talmud or with the ancient Babylonian works which treat of human creations, as with the speculations about the being and nature of the Deity, *the En Soph* and *the Sephiroth*, which are the essence of the Kabbalah.<sup>17</sup>

Having shown that the *Book Jetzira*, claimed by the Kabbalists as their first and oldest code of doctrines, has no affinity with the real tenets of the Kabbalah, we have now to examine:—

<sup>16</sup> *Der Israelitische Volkslehrer*, vol. ix. Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1859, p. 364, &c.

<sup>17</sup> For those who should wish to prosecute the study of the metaphysical *Book Jetzira*, we must mention that this Treatise was first published in a Latin translation by Postellus, Paris, 1552. It was then published in the original with five commentaries, viz., the spurious one of Saadia Gaon, one by Moses Nachmanides, one by Eleazer Worms, one by Abraham b. David, and one by Moses Botarel. Mantua, 1565. Another Latin version is given in *Jo. Pistorii artis cabalistical semptorum*, 1587, Tom. 1, p. 809 *seq.* which is ascribed to Reuchlin and Paul Ricci; and a third Latin translation, with notes and the Hebrew text, was published by Rittangel, Amsterdam, 1662. The Book is also published with a German translation and notes, by John Friedrich v. Meyer, Leipzig, 1830. As useful helps to the understanding of this difficult Book we may mention The Kusari of R. Jehudah Ha-Levi, with Cassel's German version and learned annotations, Part iv. chap 25, p. 344, &c., Leipzig, 1853; Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin, 1832), p. 165, &c.; Grætz, *Gnosticismus und Judenthum* (Krotoshin, 1846), p. 102, &c.; Jellinek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*, Part i (Leipzig, 1852), p. 3, &c. Comp. also Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebræa*, vol. i., p. 23, &c. vol. ii., p. 1196. vol. iii., p. 17, vol. iv., p. 753, &c.; *Philosophie der Geschichte*, vol. i., 2nd ed. (Münster, 1857), p. 63, &c.; Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature* (London, 1857), pp. 107, 302, &c.; and by the same author, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, col. 552.



## II. *The Book Sohar.*

Before we enter into an examination concerning the date and authorship of this renowned code of the Kabbalistic doctrines, it will be necessary to describe the component parts of the *Sohar*. It seems that the proper *Sohar*, which is a commentary on the five Books of Moses, according to the division into Sabbatic sections, was originally called *מדרש יהי אור* *the Midrash or Exposition, Let there be Light*, from the words in Gen. i, 4; because the real Midrash begins with the exposition of this verse. The name *Sohar* (*זוהר*), *i.e. Light, Splendour*, was given to it afterwards; either because this document begins with the theme light, or because the word *Sohar* frequently occurs on the first page. It is referred to by the name of the *Book Sohar* (*ספר הזוהר*) in the component parts of the treatise itself. (Comp. *The Faithful Shepherd, Sohar*, iii, 153 *b*.) The *Sohar* is also called *Midrash of R. Simon b. Jochai* (*מדרש של ר' שמעון בן יוחאי*), because this Rabbi is its reputed author.<sup>18</sup> Interspersed throughout the *Sohar*, either as parts of the text with special titles, or in separate columns with distinct superscriptions, are the following dissertations, which we detail according to the order of the pages on which they respectively commence.

1. *Tosephta* and *Mathanithan* (*תוספתא* and *מתניתן*), or *Small Additional Pieces* which are given in vol. i, 31 *b*; 32 *b*; 37 *a*; 54 *b*; 59 *a*; 60 *b*; 62; 98 *b*; 121 *a*; 122, 123 *b*; 147; 151 *a*; 152 *a*; 232, 233 *b*; 234 *a*; vol. ii, 4, 27 *b*;

<sup>18</sup> The *Sohar* was first published by Da Padova and Jacob b. Naphtali, 3 vols. 4to, Mantua, 1558-1560, with an Introduction by Is. de Lattes; then again in Cremona, 1560, fol.; Lublin, 1623, fol.; then again edited by Rosenroth, with the variations from the works *Derech Emeth*, and with the explanation of the difficult words by Issachar Bär, an Index of all the passages of Scripture explained in the *Sohar*, and with an Introduction by Moses b. Uri Sheraga Bloch, Sulzbach, 1684, fol.; with an additional Index of matters, Amsterdam, 1714, 3 vols. 8vo; *ibid.* 1728; 1772, and 1805. The references in this Essay are to the last mentioned edition. It must, however, be remarked that most of the editions have the same paging. Comp. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana Col.*, 537-545; Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, iii, 329-385.

28 *a*; 68 *b*; 135 *b*; vol. iii, 29 *b*; 30 *a*; 54 *b*; 55. They briefly discuss, by way of supplement, the various topics of the Kabbalah, such as the *Sephiroth*, the emanation of the primordial light, &c., &c., and address themselves in apostrophes to the initiated in these mysteries, calling their attention to some doctrine or explanation.

2. *Hechaloth* (היכלות) or *The Mansions and Abodes* forming part of the text, vol. i, 38 *a*—45 *b*; vol. ii, 245 *a*—269 *a*. This portion of the *Sohar* describes the topographical structure of Paradise and Hell. The mansions or palaces, which are seven in number, were at first the habitation of the earthly Adam, but, after the fall of the protoplasts, were rearranged to be the abode of the beatified saints, who for this reason have the enjoyment both of this world and the world to come. The seven words in Gen. i, 2 are explained to describe these seven mansions. *Sohar*, i, 45 *a*, describes the seven Hells. In some Codices, however, this description of the Infernal Regions is given vol. ii, 202 *b*.

3. *Sithre Tora* (סתרי תורה), or *The Mysteries of the Pentateuch*, given in separate columns, and at the bottom of pages as follows. Vol. i, 74 *b*; 75 *a*; 76 *b*—77 *a*; 78 *a*—81 *b*; 97 *a*—102 *a*; 107 *b*—111 *a*; 146 *b*—149 *b*; 151 *a*; 152 *b*; 154 *b*—157 *b*; 161 *b*—162 *b*; 165; vol. ii, 146 *a*. It discusses the divers topics of the Kabbalah, such as the evolution of the *Sephiroth*, the emanation of the primordial light, &c., &c.

4. *Midrash Ha-Neelam* (מדרש הנעלם), or *The Hidden Midrash*, occupies parallel columns with the text in vol. i, 97 *a*—140 *a*, and endeavours more to explain passages of Scripture mystically, by way of *Remasim* (רמזים) and *Gematrias* (גמטריאות), and allegorically, than to propound the doctrines of the Kabbalah. Thus Abraham's prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah is explained as an intercession by the congregated souls of the saints in behalf of the sinners about to be



punished. (*Sohar*, i, 104 b.) Lot's two daughters are the two proclivities in man, good and evil. (*Ibid.* 110.) Besides this mystical interpretation wherein the Kabbalistic rules of exegesis are largely applied, the distinguishing feature of this portion of the *Sohar* is its discussion on the properties and destiny of the soul, which constitute an essential doctrine of the Kabbalah.

5. *Raja Mehemna* (רַעִיָא מַהֲמְנָא), or the *Faithful Shepherd*. This portion of the *Sohar* is given in the second and third volumes, in parallel columns with the text; and when it is too disproportioned for columns, is given at the bottom or in separate pages, as follows. Vol. ii, 25, 40, 59 b; 91 b—93 a; 134 b, 157 b—159 a; 187 b—188 a; vol. iii, 3 a—4 b; 20 a, 24 b, 27, 28 a—29 a; 33 a—34 a; 42 a, 44 a; 63; 67 b—68 a; 81 b—83 b; 85 b—86 a; 88 b—90 a; 92 b—93 a; 97 a—101 a; 103 b—104 a; 108 b—111 b; 121 b—126 a; 145 a—146 b; 152 b—153 b; 174 a—175 a; 178 b—179 b; 180 a, 215 a—239 a; 242 a—258 a; 263 a—264 a; 270 b—283 a. It derives its name from the fact that it records the discussions which Moses the Faithful Shepherd held in conference with the prophet Elias, and with R. Simon b. Jochai, the celebrated master of the Kabbalistic school, who is called *the Sacred Light* (בּוֹצִינָא קֳדִישָׁא). The chief object of this portion is to show the profound and allegorical import of the Mosaic commandments and prohibitions, as well as of the Rabbinic injunctions and religious practices which obtained in the course of time. At the dialogue which Moses the lawgiver holds with R. Simon b. Jochai the Kabbalistic lawgiver, not only is the prophet Elias present, but Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, David, Solomon, and God himself make their appearance; the disciples of R. Simon are frequently in ecstasies when they hold converse with these illustrious patriarchs and kings of bygone days.

6. *Raze Derazin* (רַזֵּי דִרְזִין), or *the Secret of Secrets*,



*Original Secrets*, is given in vol. ii, 70 *a*—75 *a*, and is especially devoted to the physiognomy of the Kabbalah, and the connection of the soul with the body, based upon the advice of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses וְאַתָּה תַּחֲזֶה and *thou shalt look into the face*. (Exod. xviii, 21.)

7. *Saba Demishpatim* (סבא דמשפטים), or *the Discourse of the Aged in Mishpatim*, given in vol. ii, 94 *a*—114 *a*. The Aged is the prophet Elias, who holds converse with R. Simon b. Jochai about the doctrine of metempsychosis, and the discussion is attached to the Sabbatic section called מִשְׁפָּטִים, *i.e.*, Exod. xxi, 1—xxiv, 18, because the Kabbalah takes this word to signify *punishments of souls* (דִּינִין), and finds its psychology in this section. So enraptured were the disciples when their master, the Sacred Light, discoursed with Moses on this subject, that they knew not whether it was day or night, or whether they were in the body or out of the body. (*Sohar*, ii, 105 *b*.)

8. *Siphra Detzniutha* (ספרא דצניעותא), or *the Book of Secrets or Mysteries*, given in vol. ii, 176 *b*—178 *b*. It is divided into five sections (פְּרָקִים), and is chiefly occupied with discussing the questions involved in the creation, *e. gr.* the transition from the infinite to the finite, from absolute unity to multifariousness, from pure intelligence to matter, the double principle of masculine and feminine (אָבָא וּמַמְיָא), expressed in the Tetragrammaton, the androgynous protoplast, the Demonology concealed in the letters of Scripture, as seen in Gen. vi, 2 ; Josh. ii, 1 ; 1 Kings, viii, 3, 16 ; the mysteries contained in Isa. i, 4, and the doctrine of the *Sephiroth* concealed in Gen. i ; &c., as well as with showing the import of the letters יְהו"ה composing the Tetragrammaton which were the principal agents in the creation. This portion of the *Sohar* has been translated into Latin by Rosenroth in the second volume of his *Kabbala Denudata*, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1684.

9. *Idra Rabba* (אִדְרָא רַבָּא), or *the Great Assembly* is given in vol. iii, 127 *b*—145 *a*, and derives its name from the fact that it purports to give the discourses which R. Simon b. Jochai delivered to his disciples who congregated around him in large numbers. Upon the summons of the Sacred Light, his disciples assembled to listen to the secrets and enigmas contained in the *Book of Mysteries*. Hence it is chiefly occupied with a description of the form and various members of the Deity, a disquisition on the relation of the Deity, in his two aspects of the *Aged* (עֵתִיק) and the *Young* (זַעִיר), to the creation and the universe, as well as on the diverse gigantic members of the Deity, such as the head, the beard, the eyes, the nose, &c., &c.; a dissertation on pneumatology, demonology, &c., &c. It concludes with telling us that three of the disciples died during these discussions. This portion too is given in a Latin translation in the second volume of Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*.

10. *Januka* (יָנוּקָא), or *the Discourse of the Young Man*, is given in vol. iii, 186 *a*—192 *a*, and forms part of the text of the *Sohar* on the Sabbatic section called *Balak*, i.e. Numb. xxii, 2—xxv, 9. It derives its name from the fact that the discourses therein recorded were delivered by a young man, under the following circumstances:—R. Isaac and R. Jehudah, two of R. Simon b. Jochai's disciples, when on a journey, and passing through the village where the widow of R. Hamnuna Saba resided, visited this venerable woman. She asked her son, the *young hero* of this discourse, who had just returned from school, to go to these two Rabbins to receive their benediction; but the youth would not approach them because he recognised, from the smell of their garments, that they had omitted reciting on that day the prescribed declaration about the unity of the Deity (שְׁמַי). When at meals this wonderful *Januka* gave them sundry discourses on the mysterious import of the washing of hands, based on



Exod. xxx, 20, on the grace recited at meals, on the *Shechinah*, on the angel who redeemed Jacob (Gen. xlviii, 16), &c., &c., which elicited the declaration from the Rabbins that "this youth is not the child of human parents" (האי ינוקא לאו (ב"נ הוא); and when hearing all this, R. Simon b. Jochai coincided in the opinion, that "this youth is of superhuman origin."

11: *Idra Suta* (אדרא זוטא) or the *Small Assembly*, is given in vol. iii, 287 b—296 b, and derives its name from the fact that many of the disciples of R. Simon b. Jochai had died during the course of these Kabbalistic revelations, and that this portion of the *Sohar* contains the discourses which the Sacred Light delivered before his death to the small assembly of six pupils, who still survived and congregated to listen to the profound mysteries. It is to a great extent a recapitulation of the *Idra Rabba*, occupying itself with speculations about the *Sephiroth*, the Deity in his three aspects (שלת רישין), or principles which successively developed themselves from each other, viz.—the *En Soph* (אין סוף), or the Boundless in his absolute nature, the *Macroprosopon* (אריך אנפין), or the Boundless as manifested in the first emanation, and the *Microprosopon* (זעיר אנפין), the other nine emanations; the abortive creations, &c., and concludes with recording the death of Simon b. Jochai, the Sacred Light and the medium through whom God revealed the contents of the *Sohar*. The *Idra Suta* has been translated into Latin by Rosenroth in the second volume of his *Kabbala Denudata*.

From this brief analysis of its component parts and contents, it will be seen that the *Sohar* does not propound a regular Kabbalistic system, but promiscuously and reiteratedly dilates upon the diverse doctrines of this theosophy, as indicated in the forms and ornaments of the Hebrew alphabet, in the vowel points and accents, in the Divine names and the letters of which they are composed, in the narratives of the



Bible, and in the traditional and national stories. Hence the *Sohar* is more a collection of homilies or rhapsodies on Kabbalistic subjects than treatises on the Kabbalah. It is for this very reason that it became the treasury of the Kabbalah to the followers of this theosophy. Its diversity became its charm. The long conversations between its reputed author, R. Simon b. Jochai, and Moses, the great lawgiver and true shepherd, which it records; the short and pathetic prayers inserted therein; the religious anecdotes; the attractive spiritual explanations of scripture passages, appealing to the hearts and wants of men; the description of the Deity and of the *Sephiroth* under tender forms of human relationships, comprehensible to the finite mind, such as father, mother, primeval man, matron, bride, white head, the great and small face, the luminous mirror, the higher heaven, the higher earth, &c., which it gives on every page, made the *Sohar* a welcome text-book for the students of the Kabbalah, who, by its vivid descriptions of divine love, could lose themselves in rapturous embraces with the Deity.

Now, the *Sohar* pretends to be a revelation from God, communicated through R. Simon b. Jochai, who flourished about A.D. 70—110, to his select disciples. We are told that “when they assembled to compose the *Sohar*, permission was granted to the prophet Elias, to all the members of the celestial college, to all angels, spirits, and superior souls, to assist them; and the ten spiritual substances [*i.e.*, *Sephiroth*] were charged to disclose to them their profound mysteries, which were reserved for the days of the Messiah.” On the approach of death, R. Simon b. Jochai assembled the small number of his disciples and friends, amongst whom was his son, R. Eleazar, to communicate to them his last doctrines,<sup>10</sup> “when

10 וכך אמרנו לנו רבי אבא יבחונו ורבי אלעזר ברי יצמי ושאר חבריה ירחשק בלביהו: וזהו חלק ג' דף ר"א ו' :

he ordered as follows—R. Aba shall write, R. Eleazar, my son, propound, and let my other associates quietly think about it.” (*Idra Suta, Sohar*, iii, 287 b.) It is upon the strength of these declarations, as well as upon the repeated representation of R. Simon b. Jochai as speaking and teaching throughout this production, that the *Sohar* is ascribed to this Rabbi on its very title-page, and that not only Jews, for centuries, but such distinguished Christian scholars as Lightfoot, Gill, Bartolucci, Pfeifer, Knorr von Rosenroth, Molitor, &c., have maintained this opinion. A careful examination, however, of the following internal and external evidence will show that this Thesaurus of the Kabbalah is the production of the thirteenth century.

1. The *Sohar* most fulsomely praises its own author, calls him the *Sacred Light* (בּוֹצִיָא קְדִישָׁא), and exalts him above Moses, “the true Shepherd.”<sup>20</sup> “I testify by the sacred heavens and the sacred earth,” declares R. Simon b. Jochai, “that I now see what no son of man has seen since Moses ascended the second time on Mount Sinai, for I see my face shining as brilliantly as the light of the sun when it descends as a healing for the world; as it is written, ‘to you who fear my name shall shine the Sun of Righteousness with a healing in his wings.’” (Malachi, [iii, 20] iv, 2.) Yea, more, I know that my face is shining, but Moses did not know it nor understand it; for it is written (Exod. xxxiv, 29), ‘Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.’” (*Sohar*, iii, 132 b; 144 a.) The disciples deify R. Simon in the *Sohar*, declaring that the verse, “all thy males shall appear before the Lord God” (Exod. xxiii, 17), refers to R. Simon b. Jochai,

20 אסדהנה עלי שמיא עלאין דעלאין וארעה קדישה עלאה דעלאה דאנא חמי השתא מה דלא חמא בר נש מיומה דסליק משה זמנה תנינא לשורא דסיני דאנא חמינא אנפאי נהירין כנהורא דשכשא תקיפא דומין למיסק באסוותא לעלמא דכתיב וזרחא לכם יראי שמי שכש צדקה ומרפה בכנפיה: ועוד דאנא דענא דאנפאי נהירין ומשה לא ידע ולא אסתכל הה"ד ומשה לא ידע כי קץ עור פניו: וחדר חלק ג" דף קל' ב' ב':

who is the Lord, and before whom all men must appear. (*Sohar*, ii, 38 a.)<sup>21</sup>

2. The *Sohar* quotes and mystically explains the Hebrew vowel points (i, 16 b ; 24 b ; ii, 116 a ; iii, 65 a), which were introduced for the first time by R. Mocha of Palestine, A.D. 570, to facilitate the reading of the Scriptures for his students.<sup>22</sup>

3. The *Sohar* (רעיא מהימנה) *Faithful Shepherd*, on section קדושים iii, 82 b), has literally borrowed two verses from the celebrated Hymn of Ibn Gebirol, who was born about A.D. 1021 and died in 1070. This Hymn which is entitled כתר מלכות *the Royal Diadem*, is a beautiful and pathetic composition, embodying the cosmic views of Aristotle, and forms part of the Jewish service for the evening preceding the Great Day of Atonement to the present day. The quotation in the *Sohar* from this Hymn is beyond the shadow of a doubt, as will be seen from the following comparison—

<i>Sohar.</i>	<i>Ibn Gebirol.</i>
ואשתאורו [סידורא ושמשא] כגומא בלא נשמחא	אבל יש אדון עליהם
דאית אדון עליהם מחשיך מאוריהם	מחשיך מאוריהם

It must be borne in mind that, though the *Sohar* is written in Aramaic, yet this quotation is in Hebrew, and in the *rhyme* of Ibn Gebirol.<sup>23</sup>

4. The *Sohar* (i, 18 b ; 23 a) quotes and explains the interchange, on the outside of the *Mezuza*,<sup>24</sup> of the words

21 כתיב יראה כל זכורך אל פני האדון ה' מאן פני האדון ה' דא רשב"י דמאן דאיהו דכורא מן דכרניא בעי לאתהוואה קמיה: וזהו חלק ב' דף לח א':

<sup>22</sup> Comp. Alexander's edition of Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, s.v. MOCHA.

<sup>23</sup> Comp. Sachs, *Die religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, Berlin, 1845, p. 229, note 2.

<sup>24</sup> For a description of the *Mezuza*, which consists of a piece of parchment, whereon is written Deut vi, 4-9 ; xi, 13-21, put into a reed or hollow cylinder, and affixed to the right hand door-post of every door in the houses of the Jews, see Alexander's edition of Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, s.v. MEZUZA.



(כוזו) *Jehovah our God is Jehovah* for (יהוה אלהינו יהוה) *Kuzu Bemuchzaz Kuzu*, by substituting for each letter its immediate predecessor in the alphabet, which was transplanted from France into Spain in the thirteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

5. The *Sohar* (iii, 232 b) uses the expression *Esnoga*, which is a Portuguese corruption of synagogue, and explains it in a Kabbalistic manner as a compound of two Hebrew words, *i.e.*, *Es* = שן and *Noga* = נוגה *brilliant light*.<sup>26</sup>

6. The *Sohar* (ii, 32 a) mentions the Crusades, the momentary taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders from the Infidels, and the retaking of it by the Saracens.<sup>27</sup> "Woe to the time," it says, "wherein Ishmael saw the world, and received the sign of circumcision! What did the Holy One, blessed be his name? He excluded the descendants of Ishmael, *i.e.*, the Mahommedans, from the congregation in heaven, but gave them a portion on earth in the Holy Land, because of the sign of the covenant which they possess. The Mahommedans are, therefore, destined to rule for a time over the Holy Land; and they will prevent the Israelites from returning to it, till the merit of the Mahommedans is accomplished. At that time the descendants of Ishmael will be the occasion of terrible wars in the world, and the children of Edom, *i.e.*, the Christians, will gather together against them and do battle with them, some at sea and some on land, and some in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and the victory will now

25. Comp. Nissen, in the collection of various Hebrew Dissertations, entitled ציון, edited by Jost and Creizenach, vol. ii, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1842-43, p. 161, &c.

26 ושכינתא נוגה ונוגה לאש ומדבא קרי לבי כנישתא אש נוגה : וזה חלק נ' דף רס' א' א'

27 ווי על ההוא זמנא דאחיליד ישמעאל בעלמא ואחגור : מה עבר קב"ה ארחיק להו לבני ישמעאל מדבקתא דלעילא ויהב להו חולקא לתתא בארעא קדישא בגין ההוא גזירו דבהון וזמינין בנ ישמעאל למישלש בארעא קדישא כד איהי ריקניא מכלא זמנ' סגי כמה דגזירו דלהון בריקניא בלא שלימו : ואינון יעכבון להון לבג'י לאתבא לדוכתייהו עד דישתלים ההוא זכותא דבני ישמעאל : וזמינין בני ישמעאל לאתערה קרבין חקיפין בעלמא ולאחכנשא בני אדום עלייהו ויתערון קרבא בהו חד על ימא וחד על יבשא וחד סמוך לירושלים ושלשון אלן באלין וארעא קדישא לא יתמסר לבני אדום : וזה חלק ב' דף לב' א'

be on the one side and then on the other, but the Holy Land will not remain in the hands of the Christians."

7. The *Sohar* records events which transpired A.D. 1264. Thus on Numb. xxiv, 17, which the *Sohar* explains as referring to the time preceding the advent of Messiah, it remarks,<sup>28</sup> "the Holy One, blessed be he, is prepared to rebuild Jerusalem. Previous to the rebuilding thereof he will cause to appear, a wonderful and splendid star, which will shine seventy days. It will first be seen on Friday, Elul = July 25th, and disappear on Saturday or Friday evening at the end of seventy days. On the day preceding [its disappearance, *i.e.* October 2nd] when it will still be seen in the city of Rome, on that self-same day three high walls of that city of Rome and the great palace will fall, and the pontiff ruler of the city will die." (*Sohar* iii, 212 b.) Now the comet here spoken of appeared in Rome, July 25th, 1264, and was visible till October 2nd, which are literally the seventy days mentioned in the *Sohar*. Moreover, July 25th, when the comet first appeared, actually happened on a Friday; on the day of its disappearance, October 2nd, the sovereign pontiff of Rome, Urban IV, died at Perugia, when it was believed that the appearance of the comet was the omen of his death, and the great and strong palace (היכלא רברבא) Vincimonto, fell on the self-same day, October 2nd, into the hands of the insurrectionists.<sup>29</sup>

8. The *Sohar*, in assigning a reason why its contents were not revealed before, says that the "time in which R. Simon ben Jochai lived was peculiarly worthy and glorious, and that it is near the advent of the Messiah," for which cause this

28 חנן זמין קב"ה למבני ירושלים ולאחורא חד כבבא קביעא מנצחא בע' רהמין ובע' וקין נהרין מניה באמצעות רקיעא ושחאבון ביה ע' כבבין אחרנין ויהא נהיר ולהיש ע' יומין וביומא שתיחא יתחזי במה יומין לירחא שתיחא [שביעאה] ויתכניש ביומא שביעאה לסוף ע' יומין יומא קדמא יתחזי בקרתא דרומי וזהו יומא ינסלון ג' שורין עלאין מההיא קרתא דרומי היכלא רברבא ינסל ושלשא וזהו קרתא ימות; וזה חלק ג' דף ר"ב ב' :

29. Comp. Beer, in Frankel's *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, vol. v, Leipzig, 1856, p. 158-160.



revelation was reserved till the days of R. Simon, to be communicated through him. Yet, speaking elsewhere of the advent of the Messiah, the *Sohar*, instead of placing it in the second century when this Rabbi lived, forgets itself and says<sup>30</sup>—"When the sixtieth or the sixty-sixth year shall have passed over the threshold of the sixth millenium [A.M. 5060-66 = A.D. 1300—1306] the Messiah will appear" (*Sohar* i, 116 *a*, 117 *b*, Comp. also iii, 252 *a*); thus showing that the author lived in the thirteenth century of the Christian era. In perfect harmony with this is the fact that:—

9. The doctrine of the *En Soph*, and the *Sephiroth*, as well as the metempsychosisian retribution were not known before the thirteenth century.

10. The very existence of the *Sohar*, according to the confession of the staunch Kabbalist, Jehudah Chajoth (flourished 1500), was unknown to such distinguished Kabbalists as Nachmanides (1195-1270) and Ben-Adereth (1235-1310); the first who mentions it is Todros Abulafia (1234-1306).

11. Isaac of Akko (flourished 1290) fully confirms all that we have hitherto adduced from the import of this book, by his testimony that "the *Sohar* was put into the world from the head of a Spaniard." To the same effect is the testimony of Joseph Ibn Wakkar, who in speaking of later books which may be relied upon, recommends only those of Moses Nachmanides and Todros Abulafia; "but," he adds, "the *Sohar* is full of errors, and one must take care not to be misled by them." Upon which, the erudite Steinschneider rightly remarks,<sup>31</sup> "this is an impartial and indirect testimony that the *Sohar* was recognised scarcely fifty years after its

30 וכך ייתי אלף שתיאה דאיהו דא דואו כדן וא"ו יוקים לה"א, בזמנא שית זמנין עשר שיתין נפש כדן שלימו וא"ו עשר זמנין וא"ו שית זמנין עשרי (דוא"ו) וא"ו סלקא (בעשר) בי' וא, ונחתא בה"א אשתלים וא"ו גו עשר שית זמנין כדן הוו שיתין לאקמא מעפראו וזהר הלק א' דף ק"ו ב' קי"ו ב'

31 Steinschneider, in Ersch und Gruber's *Encyklopädie*, section II, vol. xxxi, p. 101; and *Jewish Literature*, Longman, 1857, p. 113.



appearing as one of the later works, and was not attributed to Simon ben Jochai."

12. That Moses de Leon, who first published and sold the *Sohar*, as the production of R. Simon b. Jochai, was himself the author of it, was admitted by his own wife and daughter, as will be seen from the following account in the *Book Juchassin*, (p.p. 88, 89, 95, ed. Filipowski, London, 1857), which we give in an abridged form.<sup>32</sup> When Isaac of Akko, who escaped the massacre after the capture of this city (A.D. 1291), came to Spain and there saw the *Sohar*, he was anxious to ascertain whether it was genuine, since it pretended to be a Palestine production, and he, though born and brought up in the Holy Land, in constant intercourse with the disciples of the celebrated Kabbalist, Nachmanides, had never heard a syllable about this marvellous work. Now, Moses de Leon, whom he met in Valladolid, declared to him on a most solemn oath that he had at Avila an ancient exemplar, which was the very autograph of R. Simon ben Jochai, and offered to submit it to him to be tested. In the meantime, however, Moses de Leon was taken ill on his journey home, and died at Arevalo, A.D. 1305. But two

82 בחדש אדר כתב ר' יצחק דמן עכו כי עכו נחרבה בשנת המשים לפרט ושנהרגו חסידי ישראל שם בד' מיתות ב"ד, ובשנת ס"ה היה זה ר' יצחק דמן עכו בנבארה באיטאליה וניצל מעכו ובשנת ס"ה עצמה בא לשולמלה ומצאתי בספר דברי הימים שלו ר"ל מר' יצחק דמן עכו הוא שעשה ספר קבלה בשנת המלאך ונחרבה בזמנו עכו ונשבו כולם בזמן בן בנו של חדמב"ן ובזמן בן ר' דוד בן אברהם בן הרמב"ם ז"ל. והוא הלך לספר לחקור כיצד נמצא בזמנו מסר הזוהר אשר עשה ר' שמעון ור' אלעזר בנו במערה אשרי הזוכים לאמתתו, באורו יראו אור: ואמרי לאמתתו, מפני שזיף מקצת אשר זיף. ואמר שקבל כי מה שנמצא בלשון ירושלמי האמין כי הם דברי ר' שמעון ואם תראה בלשון קדש האמין כי אינם דבריו רק דברי המזיף מפני שהספר האמתי הוא בלשון ירושלמי כלו ז"ל: ומפני שראיתי כי דבריו מופלאים ישאבו ממקור העליון המעיין המשפיע בלתי מקבלת בשכמל"ו, רדפתי אחריו ואשאלה את התלמידים הנמצאים בידם דברים גדולים ממנו מאין בא להם סודות מופלאים מקובלים מפה אל פה אשר לא נחנו לכתב ונמצאו שם מבוארים לכל קורא ספרי ולא מצאתי תשובותיהם על שאלתי זאת מכוונות' זה אומר בכה וזה אומר בכה: שמעתי אומרים לי על שאלתי כי הרב חנאמן הרמב"ן ז"ל שלח אותו מארץ ישראל לקטלוניא לבנו והביאו הרוח לארץ ארגון וי"א לאלקנשי ונפל ביד החכם ר' משה די ליאון הוא שאומרים עליו ר' משה דיודאל חגארה וי"א שמעולם לא חבר רשב" ספר זה, אבל ר' משה זה היה יודע שם הכותב ובכחו יכתוב ר' משה זו דברים נפלאים אלה, ולמען יקח בהם מחיר גדול כסף וזהב רב תולה דבריו באשלי רבני ואמר מתוך הספר אשר חבר רשב" ור' אלעזר בנו וחבריו אני מעתיק להם דברים אלו. ואני בבואי ספרדה ואבא אל עיר ואלדוליד אשר המלך (שם) ואמצא שם לר' משה זה ואמצא חן בעיניו וידבר עמי וידר לי וישבע לאמרי: כה יעשה לי אלקים וכה יוסיף אם לא הספר הקדמון אשר חבר רשב" אשר הוא היום בביתי במדינת ישבילי היא אוילה בבואך אלי שם אראך. ויהי אחר הדברים האלה נספר ממני וילך ר' משה זה אל עיר

distinguished men of Avila, David Rafen and Joseph de Avila, who were determined to sift the matter, ascertained the falsehood of this story from the widow and daughter of Moses de Leon. Being a rich man and knowing that Moses de Leon left his family without means, Joseph de Avila promised, that if she would give him the original MS. of the *Sohar* from which her husband made the copies, his son should marry her daughter, and that he would give them a handsome dowry. Whereupon the widow and daughter declared, that they did not possess any such MS., that Moses de Leon never had it, but that he composed the *Sohar* from his own head, and wrote it with his own hand. Moreover, the widow candidly confessed that she had frequently asked her husband why he published the production of his own intellect under another man's name, and that he told her that if he were to publish it under his own name nobody would buy it, whereas under the name of R. Simon b. Jochai it yielded him a large revenue. This account is confirmed in a most remarkable manner by the fact that—

א ר ב לא לשוב אל ביתו לאוילא ויחלח בארבלא וימת שם' וכשמעי הבשורה הישב הזה לי עד מות ואצא ואשים לדרך פעמי ואבא אל אוילא ומצאתי שם חכם גדול וזקן ושמו ר' דוד דאפן קורפו ואמצאה חן בעיניו ואשביעהו לאמר: הנחברו לו סודות ספר הזהר שבני אדם נחלקים זה אומר בכה וזה אומר בכה ור' משה עצמו נדר לי (?) לתת אלי ולא הספיק עד שמח ואיני יודע על מי אסמוך ולדברי מי אאמין. ויאמר דע באמת כי נתברר לי בלא ספק שמעולם לא בא לידו של ר' משה זה ואין בעולם ספר זהר זה רק היה ר' משה בעל שם הכותב ובכחו כתב כל מה שכתב בספר הזהר ועתה שמע נא באיזה דרך נתברר לי: דע כי ר' משה זה היה מפור גדול ומוציא בעין יפה ממונו עד שהיום הזה ביתו מלא כסף וזהב שנתנו לו העשירים המבינים בסודות גדולים אלא (אלו) אשר יתן להם כתובים בשם הכותב וכחר נתרוקן כלו עד שעזב אשתו ובתו הגה ערומות שריות ברעב ובצמא ובחוסר כל. וכשמענו שמח בעיר ארבלו ואקום ואלך אל העשיר הגדול אשר בעיר הזאת הנקרא ר' יוסף די אוילא ואומר לו: עתה הגיע העת אשר תזכה לספר הזהר אשר לא יערכנו זהב וזכוכית אם תעשה את אשר איעצך. ועצתי היא זאת: שיקרא ר' יוסף זה לאשתו ויאמר לה קחי נא מנחה נאה ביד שפחתך ושלחי אותה לאשת ר' משה ותעש כן: ויהי ממחרת ויאמר עוד לה לבי נא ביתה אשת ר' משה ואמרי לה דעי כי רצוני הוא להשיא את בתך לבני ואלך לא יחסר להם לאכל ובגד ללבוש כל ימך ואין אני מבקשת ממך דבר בעולם רק ספר הזהר אשר היה אישך מעתיק ממנו ונותן לבני אדם דברים אלה תאמרי לה לבד ולבתה לבד ותשמיעי את דבריהם אשר יענוכה ונראה היהיו מכוונים אם לא. ותלך ותעש כן. ותען אשת ר' משה ותשבע לאשת ר' יוסף לאמר כה יעשה לי אלקים וכה יוסף אם מעולם ספר זה היה עם אישי אבל מראשו ולבו מדעתו ושכלו כתב כל מה שכתב. ואומרה לו בראותי אותו כותב מבלעדי דבר לפניו: מדוע תאמר שאתה מעתיק מספר ואתה אין לך ספר דק מראשך אתה כותב? הלא נאה לך לאמר כי משלך אתה כותב ויותר יהיה כבוד לך. ויען אלי ויאמר: אלו אודיע להם סודי זה שמשכלי אני כותב לא ישגיחו בדברי ולא יתנו בעבורם פרומה כי יאמרו כי מלבו הוא בודה אותם אבל עתה כאשר ישמעו שמתוך ספר הזהר אשר חבר רשב"י ברוח הקדש אני מעתיקם יקנו אותם בדמים יקרים כאשר עיניך רואות:



13. The *Sohar* contains whole passages which Moses de Leon translated into Aramaic, from his other works, as the learned Jellinek has demonstratively proved. To transfer these passages here would occupy too much of our space. We must, therefore, refer the reader to the monograph itself,<sup>33</sup> and shall only give one example, which the erudite historian, Dr. Graetz,<sup>34</sup> has pointed out. In his *Sephar Ha-Rimon* (ספר הרימון), which he composed A.D. 1827, and which is a Kabbalistic explanation of the Mosaic precepts, Moses de Leon endeavours to account for the non-occurrence of the Tetragrammaton in the history of the hexahemeron, whilst it does occur immediately afterwards, by submitting that as the earthly world is finite and perishable, this divine name, which denotes eternity, could not be used at the creation thereof; for if it had been created under its influence, the world would have been as imperishable as this name. In corroboration of this, Moses de Leon quotes the passage (לכו חזו מפעלות) (אלהים אשר שם שמות בארץ) *Come, behold the works of Elohim, what perishableness he made in the earth* (Ps. xlvii, 8), showing that שמות *destruction, perishableness*, is consonant with the name אלהים. In looking at the original, it will be seen that the text has יהוה and not אלהים, and that Moses de Leon, by a slip of memory, confounded this passage with לכו וראו מפעלות אלהים *Come and see the works of Elohim* (Ps. xlvii, 5). Now, the whole explanation and the same blunder are transferred into the *Sohar*. The commentators on this treasury of the Kabbalah, not knowing the cause of this blunder, express their great surprise that the *Sohar* should explain a mis-quotation. We subjoin the two passages in parallel columns.

33 *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon, und sein Verhältniss zum Sohar*, von Adolph Jellinek, Leipzig, 1851, p. 21-36. Jellinek also gives additional information on this subject in his other contributions to the Kabbalah which will be found mentioned in the third part of this Essay.

34 Comp. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, Leipzig, 1863, p. 498, where other facts are given, proving that Moses de Leon is the author of the *Sohar*.



ר' יהודה פתח לנו חזו מפעלות אלהים אשר  
שם שמות וגו' האי קרא אוקמוה ואהמו . . .  
שמות דאי דהא שמא גרים לכלא (לשון שמשון)  
דאלו חזו מפעלות י' ה' ו' ה' שם קיום בארץ אבל  
בגין דהוון מפעלות שמא דאלהים שם שמות  
בארץ: אמר ליה ר' חייא וגו'

אמנם כי יש פירוש אחר כהיות שם המיוחד  
נוכח באחרונה לקיים על ההיות אמרו חז"ל לנו  
ראו מפעלות וכו' משני שהיו מפעלות אלהים  
שם שמות . . . שאלמלא היו מפעלות  
י' ה' ו' ה' שם קיום בארץ: והענין בזה על כל  
המפעלות זה העולם השפל כלם נססדים מפני  
שכל הווייתו בשם זה שאלמלא יהיו בשם  
המיוחד כלם יהיו קיימים בקיומם וכו'

It is for these and many other reasons that the *Sohar* is now regarded by Steinschneider, Beer, Jellinek, Graetz, &c., as a pseudograph of the thirteenth century. That Moses de Leon should have palmed the *Sohar* upon Simon .b. Jochai was nothing remarkable, since this Rabbi is regarded by tradition as the embodiment of mysticism. No better hero could be selected for the *Sohar* than R. Simon, of whom the Talmud gives us the following account: "Once upon a time, R. Jehudah, R. Jose, and R. Simon sat together, and R. Jehudah b. Gerim sat by them. R. Jehudah then began and said—How beautiful are the works of this nation (*i.e.*, the Romans)! they have erected market-places, they have erected bridges, and they have erected baths! R. Jose was quiet, but R. Simon b. Jochai answered and said: what they have built they have built for no one except for their own use, they made markets to allure prostitutes, they made baths to gratify themselves therein, and bridges to get tolls by them. Jehudah b. Gerim repeated this, and the emperor's government got to hear it, who passed the following decree: Jehudah, who exalted, is to be exalted; Jose, who was silent, is to be banished to Zipporis; and Simon, who spoke evil, is to be killed. He (*i.e.*, R. Simon) at once concealed himself with his son, in the place of study, whither his wife daily brought them a loaf and a flask of water; but as the rigour of the decree increased, he said to his son: women are weak-minded—if she is tortured she may betray us. Hence, they left, and betook themselves into a deep cavern, where by a miracle

a crab-tree and a well were created for their subsistence. He and his son sat in the sand up to their necks all the day studying the Law. They spent twelve long years in this cavern; when Elias the prophet came and stood at the entrance of the cavern, and called out—Who will inform the son of Jochai that the emperor is dead, and that the decree is commuted? They came out and saw the people tilling and sowing.” (*Sabbath*, 33 a. Comp. also, *Jerusalem Shebiith*, ix, 1; *Bereshith Rabba*, cap. lxxix; *Midrash Koheleth*, x, 8; *Midrash Esther*, i, 9.) This is the secret why the story that R. Simon b. Jochai composed the *Sohar* during his twelve years’ residence in the cavern obtained credence among the followers of the Kabbalah.

### III. *The Commentary on the Ten Sephiroth.*

It is this commentary to which we must look, as the most ancient document embodying the doctrines of the Kabbalah. The author of this commentary, R. Azariel b. Menachem, was born in Valladolid, about 1160. He distinguished himself as a philosopher, Kabbalist, Talmudist, and commentator, as his works indicate; he was a pupil of Isaac the Blind, who is regarded as the originator of the Kabbalah, and master of the celebrated R. Moses Nachmanides, who is also a distinguished pillar of Kabbalism. R. Azariel died A.D. 1238, at the advanced age of seventy-eight years. “The Commentary on the Ten *Sephiroth*” is in questions and answers,<sup>20</sup> and the following is the lucid analysis of it as given by the erudite Jellinek, according to Spinoza’s form of Ethics.

20. *דרך שאלה ותשובה* Commentary on the Ten Sephiroth, by way of Questions and Answers. This commentary was first known through the Kabbalistic works of Meier Ibu Gabbai, entitled *דרך אמונה*, *The Path of Faith*, printed in Padua, 1503, and *עבודת הקדש*, *The Service of Holiness*, also called *מראה אלהים*, *The Vision of the Lord*, first printed in Mantua, 1545; then Venice, 1567, and Cracow, 1578. It was then published in Gabriel Warschawer’s volume entitled *A Collection of Kabbalistic Treatises* (*ספר לקוטים בקבלה*), Warsaw, 1798; and has recently been published in Berlin, 1850. It is to this Berlin edition that the references in this Essay are made.



1. DEFINITION.—By the Being who is the cause and governor of all things, I understand the *En Soph*, *i.e.*, a Being infinite, boundless, absolutely identical with itself, united in itself, without attributes, will, intention, desire, thought, word or deed. (Answers 2 and 4.)

2. DEFINITION.—By *Sephiroth* I understand the potencies which emanated from the absolute *En Soph*, all entities limited by quantity, which like the will, without changing its nature, wills diverse objects that are the possibilities of multifarious things. (Answers 3 and 9.)

i. PROPOSITION.—The primary cause and governor of the world is the *En Soph*, who is both immanent and transcendent. (Answer 1.)

(a) PROOF.—Each effect has a cause, and every thing which has order and design has a governor. (Answer 1.)

(b) PROOF.—Every thing visible has a limit, what is limited is finite, what is finite is not absolutely identical; the primary cause of the world is invisible, therefore unlimited, infinite, absolutely identical, *i.e.*, he is the *En Soph*. (Answer 2.)

(c) PROOF.—As the primary cause of the world is infinite, nothing can exist *without* (EXTRA) him; hence he is immanent. (*Ibid.*)

*Scholion*.—As the *En Soph* is invisible and exalted, it is the root of both faith and unbelief. (*Ibid.*)

ii. PROPOSITION.—The *Sephiroth* are the medium between the absolute *En Soph* and the real world.

PROOF.—As the real world is limited and not perfect, it cannot directly proceed from the *En Soph*, still the *En Soph* must exercise his influence over it, or his perfection would cease. Hence the *Sephiroth*, which, in their intimate connection with the *En Soph*, are perfect, and in their severance are imperfect, must be the medium. (Answer 3.)

*Scholion*.—Since all existing things originated by means of



the *Sephiroth*, there are a higher, a middle, and a lower degree of the real world. (*Vide infra*, Proposition 6.)

iii. PROPOSITION.—There are ten intermediate *Sephiroth*.

PROOF.—All bodies have three dimensions, each of which repeats the other ( $3 \times 3$ ); and by adding thereunto space generally, we obtain the *number ten*. As the *Sephiroth* are the potencies of all that is limited they must be *ten*. (Answer 4).

(a) *Scholion*.—The number ten does not contradict the absolute unity of the *En Soph*, as *one* is the basis of all numbers, plurality proceeds from unity, the germs contain the development, just as fire, flame, sparks and colour have *one* basis, though they differ from one another. (Answer 6.)

(b) *Scholion*.—Just as cogitation or thought, and even the mind as a cogitated object, is limited, becomes concrete and has a measure, although *pure thought* proceeds from the *En Soph*; so limit, measure, and concretion are the attributes of the *Sephiroth*. (Answer 7.)

4. PROPOSITION.—The *Sephiroth* are emanations and not creations.

1. PROOF.—As the absolute *En Soph* is perfect, the *Sephiroth* proceeding therefrom must also be perfect; hence they are not created. (Answer 5.)

2. PROOF.—All created objects diminish by abstraction; the *Sephiroth* do not lessen, as their activity never ceases; hence they cannot be created. (*Ibid.*)

*Scholion*.—The first *Sephira* was in the *En Soph* as a power before it became a reality; then the second *Sephira* emanated as a potency for the intellectual world, and afterwards the other *Sephiroth* emanated for the sensuous and material world. This, however, does not imply a *prius* and *posterius* or a gradation in the *En Soph*, but just as a light whose kindled lights which shine sooner and later and variously, so it embraces all in a unity. (Answer 8.)

5. PROPOSITION.—The *Sephiroth* are both active and passive (מקביל ומתקבל).

PROOF.—As the *Sephiroth* do not set aside the unity of the *En Soph*, each one of them must receive from its predecessor, and impart to its successor—i.e., be receptive and imparting. (Answer 9.)

6. PROPOSITION.—The first *Sephira* is called *Inscrutable Height* (רום מעלה); the second, *Wisdom* (חכמה); the third, *Intelligence* (בינה); the fourth, *Love* (חסד); the fifth, *Justice* (פהר); the sixth, *Beauty* (תפארת); the seventh, *Firmness* (נצח); the eighth, *Splendour* (הוד); the ninth, *the Righteous is the Foundation of the World* (צדיק יסוד עולם); and the tenth, *Righteousness* (צדק).

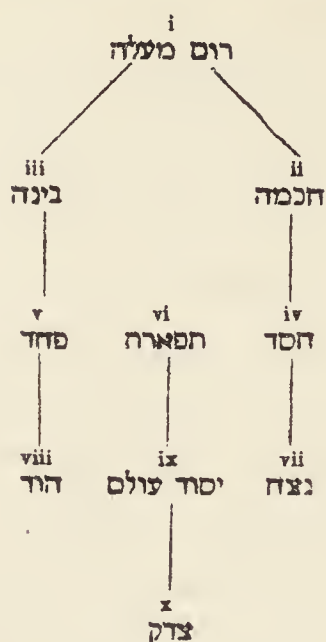
(a) *Scholion*.—The first three *Sephiroth* form the world of thought; the second three the world of soul; and the four last the world of body—thus corresponding to the intellectual, moral, and material worlds. (Answer 10.)

(b) *Scholion*.—The first *Sephira* stands in relation to the soul, inasmuch as it is called a *unity* (יחידה); the second, inasmuch as it is denominated *living* (חיה); the third, inasmuch as it is termed *spirit* (רוח); the fourth, inasmuch as it is called *vital principle* (נפש); the fifth, inasmuch as it is denominated *soul* (נשמה); the sixth operates on the blood, the seventh on the bones, the eighth on the veins, the ninth on the flesh, and the tenth on the skin. (*Ibid.*)

(c) *Scholion*.—The first *Sephira* is like the concealed light, the second like sky-blue, the third like yellow, the fourth like white, the fifth like red, the sixth like white-red, the seventh like whitish-red, the eighth like reddish-white, the ninth like white-red-whitish-red-reddish-white, and the tenth is like the light reflecting all colours.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The above analysis is taken from Dr. Jellinek's *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbalah. Erstes Heft. Leipzig, 1852*. This erudite scholar also gives some additional information on R. Azariel in the second part of his *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbalah*, p. 32, &c. Leipzig, 1852.

The gradation of the *Sephiroth* is as follows—



For this date of the Kabbalah (*i.e.*, 1150-1190) we have the testimony of some of the earliest and most intelligent Kabbalists themselves. Thus R. Joseph b. Abraham Gikatilla (born about 1247, and died 1307) most distinctly tells us that R. Isaac the Blind, of Posquiers (flour. circa 1190-1210), the teacher of R. Azariel, was the first who taught the doctrines of this theosophy.<sup>22</sup> R. Bechja b. Asher, another Kabbalist who lived soon after this system was made known, in his commentary on the Pentateuch, which he composed A.D. 1291, styles R. Isaac the Blind, as *the Father of the Kabbalah*.<sup>23</sup> Shem Tob b. Abraham Ibn Gaon (born 1283), another ancient Kabbalist, in attempting to trace a Kabbalistic explanation of a passage in the Bible to its fountain head, goes back to R. Isaac as the primary source, and connects him immediately with the prophet Elias, who is said to have revealed the

22 וקבלה שבידינו על היות אלו החכמים משלשלת קבלה מעשה מרכבה מסיני עד עמוד הימיני  
 This passage from Gikatilla's פירוש ההגדה which is contained in Moses de Leon's ספר הנפש החכמה is quoted by Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, p. 444.

23 ר' יצחק סגי נהור אבי הקבלה Comp. Commentary on Pericope ed. Lemberg, 1811.



mysteries of this theosophy to this corypheus of the Kabbalah.<sup>24</sup> Whilst the author of the Kabbalistic work entitled מערכת אלהות the contemporary of R. Solomon b. Abraham b. Adereth (flour. A.D. 1260), frankly declares that “the doctrine of the *En Soph* and the *ten Sephiroth* is neither to be found in the Law, Prophets, or Hagiographa, nor in the writings of the Rabbins of blessed memory, but rests solely upon signs which are scarcely perceptible.”<sup>25</sup>

It has indeed been supposed that covert allusions to the *Sephiroth* are to be found in the Talmud. If this could be proved, the date of the Kabbalah would have to be altered from the twelfth to the second or third century after Christ. An examination, however, of the passage in question, upon which this opinion is based, will show how thoroughly fanciful it is. The passage is as follows—“The Rabbins propound, At first the name of twelve letters was communicated to every one, but when the profane multiplied, it was only communicated to the most pious of the priests, and these pre-eminently pious priests absorbed it from their fellow priests in the chant. It is recorded that R. Tarphon said, I once went up the orchestra in the Temple after my maternal uncle, and, bending forward my ear to a priest, I heard how he absorbed it from his fellow priests in the chant. R. Jehudah said in the name of Rab, the divine name of forty-two letters is only communicated to such as are pious, not easily provoked, not given to drinking, and are not self opinionated. He who

24 In his Super-Commentary on Nachmanides' Treatise on Secrets, (סודות) entitled עשר שם טוב or סוד שם טוב (הר"ם) remarks as follows על אלהו [ראב"ד] עד אלהו. In another Kabbalistic work, entitled בדי הארון ומגדל חננאל which he completed at Tafet in 1358, he says—רבי עזרא ורבי עזריאל מגירונה חבדו פירוש ההגדות על—מי קבלה והוסיף עזרא לחבר פירוש החפלות . . . כמו שקבלו מרבי יצחק סגי נהור. These two works are still in MS, and the quotations are given in Cormoly's *Itinéraris*, p. 276, and in Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, p. 445.

25 ודע כי האין סוף אשר זכרנו איננו רמוז לא בחורה ולא בגביאים ולא בכתובים ולא בדברי ר"ל  
Comp. מערכת אלהות cap. vii, 32 b, ed. Mantua, 1558. אך קבלו בו בעלי הסבורה קצת רמו

knows this name and preserves it in purity, is beloved above, cherished below, respected by every creature, and is heir of both worlds—the world that now is, and the world to come.” (*Babylon Kiddushin*, 71 a.) Upon this the celebrated Maimonides (born 1135, died 1304) remarks—“Now everyone who has any intelligence knows that the forty-two letters cannot possibly make one word, and that they must therefore have composed several words. There is no doubt that these words conveyed certain ideas, which were designed to bring man nearer to the true conception of the Divine essence, through the process we have already described. These words, composed of numerous letters, have been designated as a single name, because like all accidental proper names they indicate one single object; and to make the object more intelligible several words are employed, as many words are sometimes used to express one single thing. This must be well understood, that they taught the ideas indicated by these names, and not the simple pronunciation of the meaningless letters. Neither the divine name composed of twelve letters, nor the one of forty-two letters, ever obtained the title of *Shem Ha-Mephorash*—this being the designation of the *particular name*, or the Tetragrammaton, as we have already propounded. As to the two former names, they assuredly convey a certain metaphysical lesson, and there is proof that one of them contained a lesson of this kind; for the Rabbins say in the Talmud with regard to it: ‘The name of forty-two letters is very holy, and is only communicated to such as are pious, &c., &c., &c.’ Thus far the Talmud. But how remote from the meaning of their author is the sense attached to these words! Forsooth most people believe that it is simply by the pronunciation of the mere letters, without any idea being attached to them, that the sublime things are to be obtained, and that it is for them that those moral qualifications and that great preparation are requisite. But it is evident that



the design of all this is to convey certain metaphysical ideas which constitute the mysteries of the divine Law as we have already explained. It is shewn in the metaphysical Treatises that it is impossible to forget science—I speak of the perception of *the active intellect*—and this is the meaning of the remark in the Talmud, ‘he [to whom the divine name of forty-two letters is communicated] retains what he learns.’ ”<sup>26</sup>

It is this passage, as well as Maimonides’ comment upon it, which led the erudite Franck to the conclusion that the mysteries of the Kabbalah were known to the doctors of the Talmud, and that the forty-two letters composing the divine name are *the ten Sephiroth*, which, by supplying the *Vav* conjunctive before the last *Sephira*, consist exactly of forty-two letters, as follows :—

5 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 4 + 4 + 3 = 42  
 כתר חכמה בינה גדולה גבורה תפארת נצח הוד מלכות ויסוד

But Franck, like many other writers, confounds mysticism with Kabbalah. That the Jews had an extensive mysticism, embracing theosophy with its collateral angelology and uranology, as well as christology and magic, long before the development of the Kabbalah, and that there were a certain class of people who specially devoted themselves to the study of this mysticism, and who styled themselves “*Men of Faith*” (בעלי אמונות), is evident from a most cursory glance at the Jewish literature. Based upon the remark—“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant,” (Ps. xxv, 14,) some of the most distinguished Jewish doctors in the days of Christ, and afterwards, claimed an attainment of superhuman knowledge, communicated to them either by a voice from heaven (בת קול) or by Elias the prophet (*Baba Mezia*, 59 b; *Sabbath*, 77 b; *Chagiga*, 3 b, 10 a; *Sanhedrin*, 48 b; *Nidda*, 20 b; *Joma*, 9 b).

<sup>26</sup> Comp. *More Nebuchim*, part 1, cap. lxii.



The sages had also secret doctrines about the hexahemeron (מעשה בראשית) and the Vision of Ezekiel = Theosophy (מעשה מרכבה), "which were only communicated to presidents of courts of justice and those who were of a careful heart" (*Chagiga*, 12 a--16 a). Coeven with this are the mysteries connected with the different letters of the several divine names (*Kiddushin*, 71 'a). Those who were deemed worthy to be admitted into these secrets could at any moment call into existence new creations either in the animal or vegetable kingdom (*Sanhedrin*, 65 b, 67 b; *Jerusalem Sanhedrin*, vii); they could fly in the air, heal the sick, drive out evil spirits, and suspend the laws of nature, by sundry mystical transpositions and commutations of the letters composing the divine names, which they wrote down on slips of vellum or pieces of paper and called "amulets" (קמיעות). This mysticism and the literature embodying it began to develop themselves more fully and to spread more extensively from the end of the eighth and the commencement of the ninth centuries. Towards the close of the eighth century came into existence

1. The celebrated mystical work entitled *the Alphabet of Rabbi Akiba*, which alternately treats each letter of the Hebrew Alphabet as representing an idea as an abbreviation for a word (נוטריקון), and as the symbol of some sentiment, according to its peculiar form, in order to attach to those letters moral, theanthropic, angelological and mystical notions. This work has recently been reprinted in two recensions in Jellinek's *Beth Ha-Midrash*, vol. iii, p. 12—64, Leipzig, 1855.

2. The *Book of Enoch* which describes the glorification of Enoch and his transformation into the angel Metatron, regarding him as ידו"ד הקטן *the Minor Deity*, in contradistinction to ידו"ד הגדול *the Great God* and which was originally a constituent part of *the Alphabet of R. Akiba*. It is reprinted in Jellinek's *Beth Ha-Midrash*, vol. ii, pp. 114-117. Leipzig, 1853.

3. *Shiur Koma* (שיעור קומה), or *the Dimensions of the Deity*, which claims to be a revelation from the angel Metatron to R. Ishmael, and describes the size of the body and the sundry members of the Deity. It is given in the Book Razi'el (ספר רזיאל) of Eleazer b. Jehudah of Worms, printed at Amsterdam, 1701, and at Warsaw, 1812.

4. *The Palaces* (היכלות). This mystical document opens with an exaltation of those who are worthy to see the chariot throne (צפיית המרכבה), declaring that they know whatever happens and whatever is about to happen in the world ; that he who offends them will be severely punished ; and that they are so highly distinguished as not to be required to rise before any one except a king, a high priest, and the Sanhedrim. It then celebrates the praises of Almighty God and his chariot throne ; describes the dangers connected with seeing this chariot throne (מרכבה) ; gives an episode from the history of the martyrs and the Roman emperor Lupinus, a description of the angels, and of the sundry formulæ wherewith they are adjured. Whereupon follows a description of the seven heavenly palaces, each of which is guarded by eight angels, and into which the student of the mysterious chariot throne may transpose himself in order to learn all mysteries, a description of the formulæ by virtue of which these angelic guards are obliged to grant admission into the celestial palaces, and of the peculiar qualifications of those who desire to enter into them. The document then concludes with detailing some hymns of praise, a conversation between God, Israel, and the angels about those mysteries, a knowledge of which makes man suddenly learned without any trouble, and with a description of this mystery, which consists in certain prayers and charms. This mystical production has also been reprinted in Jellinek's valuable *Beth Ha-Midrash*, vol. iii, pp. 83-108.

These mystical treatises constitute the centre around which



cluster all the productions of this school, which gradually came into existence in the course of time. So numerous became the disciples of mysticism in the twelfth century, and so general became the belief in their power of performing miraculous cures, driving out evil spirits, &c., &c., by virtue of charms consisting of the letters composing the divers divine names transposed and commuted in mystical forms, that the celebrated Maimonides found it necessary to denounce the system. "We have one divine name only," says he, "which is not derived from His attributes, viz., the Tetragrammaton, for which reason it is called *Shem Ha-Mephorash* (שם המפורש). Believe nothing else, and give no credence to the nonsense of the writers of charms and amulets (כותבי הקמיעות), to what they tell you or to what you find in their foolish writings about the divine names, which they invent without any sense, calling them appellations of the Deity (שמות), and affirming that they require holiness and purity and perform miracles. All these things are fables: a sensible man will not listen to them, much less believe in them." (*More Nebuchim*, i, 61.)

But this mysticism, with its thaumaturgy, though espoused by later Kabbalists and incorporated into their writings, is perfectly distinct from the Kabbalah in its first and pure form, and is to be distinguished by the fact that it has no system, knows nothing of the speculations of *the En Soph*, *the ten Sephiroth*, the doctrine of emanations, and the four worlds, which are the essential and peculiar elements of the Kabbalah. As to Franck's ingenious hypothesis, based upon the same number of letters constituting a divine name, mentioned in the Talmud, and the *ten Sephiroth*, we can only say that the Kabbalists themselves never claimed this far-fetched identity, and that Ignatz Stern has shown (*Ben Chananja*, iii, p. 261), that the *Sohar* itself takes the ten divine names mentioned in the Bible, which it enumerated in vol. iii, 11 a, and which



it makes to correspond to the *ten Sephiroth*, to be the sacred name composed of forty-two letters, viz. :—

$$4 + 2 + 2 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 2 + 5 + 2 + 4 + 3 + 4 = 42$$

אֱהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֱהִיָּה יְהוָה יְדוּד אֱלֹדִים יְדוּד צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָנִי

Having ascertained its *date*, we now come to the *origin* of the Kabbalah. Nothing can be more evident than that the cardinal and distinctive tenets of the Kabbalah in its original form, as stated at the beginning of the second part of this Essay, are derived from Neo-Platonism. Any doubt upon this subject must be relinquished when the two systems are compared. The very expression *En Soph* (אֵין סוֹפ) which the Kabbalah uses to designate the Incomprehensible One, is foreign, and is evidently an imitation of the Greek ἀπειρος. The speculations about *the En Soph*, that he is superior to actual being, thinking and knowing, are thoroughly Neo-Platonic (ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας, ἐνεργίας, νοῦ καὶ νοήσεως); and R. Azariel, whose work, as we have seen, is the first Kabbalistic production, candidly tells us that in viewing the Deity as purely negative, and divesting him of all attributes, he followed the opinion of the philosophers.<sup>27</sup> When R. Azariel moreover tells us that “the *En Soph* can neither be comprehended by the intellect, nor described in words; for there is no letter or word which can grasp him,” we have here almost the very words of Proclus, who tells us that, “although he is generally called the unity (τὸ ἓν) or the first, it would be better if no name were given him; for there is no word which can depict his nature—he is (ἀρρήτος, ἀγνωστός), the inexpressible, the unknown.” (*Theol. Plat.* ii, 6.)

The Kabbalah propounds that the *En Soph*, not being an object of cognition, made his existence known in the creation of the world by *the Sephiroth*, or *Emanations*, or *Intelligences*.

<sup>27</sup> וחכמי המחקר מודים בדבר ואומרים כי אין השתנו כי אם על דרך לא *Commentary on the ten Sephiroth*, 2 a.

So Neo-Platonism. The *Sephiroth* are divided in the Kabbalah into a trinity of triads respectively denominated עולם השכל *the Intellectual World*, עולם הנפש *the Sensuous World*, and עולם הטבע *the Material World*, which exactly corresponds to the three triads of Neo-Platonism νοῦς, ψύχη, and φύσις. The Kabbalah teaches that these *Sephiroth* are both infinite and perfect, and finite and imperfect, in so far as the source from which they emanate imparts or withholds his fulness from them. Neo-Platonism also teaches that "every emanation, though less perfect than that from which it emanates, has yet a similarity with it, and, so far as this similarity goes, remains in it, departing from it so far as it is unlike, but as far as possible being one with it and remaining in it."<sup>28</sup> Even the comparison between the emanation of *the Sephiroth* from *the En Soph*, and the rays proceeding from light to describe the immanency and perfect unity of the two, is the same as the Neo-Platonic figure employed to illustrate the emanations from one principium (οἶον ἐκ φωτὸς τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ περιλαμψιν).

<sup>28</sup> Proclus, *Inst. Theol.* 7, 31; Smith, *Dictionary of Roman and Greek Biography and Mythology*, s.v. PROCLUS.

## III.

It now remains for us to describe the development of the Kabbalah, to point out the different schools into which its followers are divided, and to detail the literature which this theosophy called into existence in the course of time. The limits of this Essay demand that this should be done as briefly as possible.

The great land mark in the development of the Kabbalah is the birth of *the Sohar*, which divides the history of this theosophy into two periods, viz., the pre-*Sohar* period and the post-*Sohar* period. During these two periods different schools developed themselves, which are classified by the erudite historian, Dr. Graetz, as follows :—<sup>1</sup>

I.—THE SCHOOL OF GERONA, so called from the fact that the founders of it were born in this place and established the school in it. To this school, which is the cradle of the Kabbalah, belong

1. Isaac the Blind (flour. 1190-1210), denominated the Father of the Kabbalah. His productions have become a prey to time, and only a few fragments have survived as quotations in other theosophic works. From these we learn that he espoused the despised doctrine of metempsychosis as an article of creed, and that from looking into a man's face, he could tell whether the individual possessed a new soul from the celestial world of spirits, or whether he had an old soul which has been migrating from body to body and has still to accomplish its purity before its return to rest in its heavenly home.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, p. 110, &c.



2. Azariel and Ezra, disciples of Isaac the Blind. The former of these is the author of the celebrated *Commentary on the Ten Sephiroth*, which is the first Kabbalistic production, and of which we have given an analysis in the second part of this Essay (*vide supra*, p. 176). Of Ezra next to nothing is known beyond the fact that his great intimacy with Azariel led some writers to identify the two names.

3. Jehudah b. Jakar, a contemporary of the foregoing Kabbalists. No works of his have survived, and he is only known as the teacher of the celebrated Nachmanides and from being quoted as a Kabbalistic authority.

4. Moses Nachmanides, born in Gerona about 1195, the pupil of Azariel, Ezra, and Jehudah Ibn Jakar. It was the conversion of this remarkable and famous Talmudist to this newly-born Kabbalah which gave to it an extraordinary importance and rapid spread amongst the numerous followers of Nachmanides. It is related that, notwithstanding all the efforts of his teachers, Nachmanides at first was decidedly adverse to this system; and that one day the Kabbalist who most exerted himself to convert him was caught in a house of ill fame and condemned to death. He requested Nachmanides to visit him on the Sabbath, being the day fixed for his execution; and when Nachmanides reproved him for his sins, the Kabbalist declared that he was innocent, and that he would appear at his house on this very day, after the execution, and partake with him the Sabbath meal. He proved true to his promise, as by means of the Kabbalistic mysteries he effected that, and an ass was executed in his stead, and he himself was suddenly transposed into Nachmanides' house. From that time Nachmanides avowed himself a disciple of the Kabbalah, and was initiated into its mysteries.<sup>2</sup> His numerous writings, an account of which will be found in Alexander's edition of

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Ibn Jachja, *Shalsheth Ha-Kabbalah*; Grætz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vii, 88, &c.

Kitto's Cyclopædia, under NACHMANIDES, are pervaded with the tenets of this system. In the Introduction to his Commentary on the Pentateuch he remarks--“ We possess a faithful tradition that the whole Pentateuch consists of names of the Holy One, blessed be he ; for the words may be divided into sacred names in another sense, so that it is to be taken as an allegory. Thus the words—**בראשית ברא אלהים** in Gen. i, 1, may be redivided into other words, *ex. gr.* **בראש יתברא אלהים** In like manner is the whole Pentateuch, which consists of nothing but transpositions and numerals of divine names.”<sup>3</sup>

5. The *Treatise on the Emanations* (**מסכת אצילות**), supposed to have been written by R. Isaac Nasir in the first half of the twelfth century. The following is an analysis of this production. Based upon the passage—“ Jaresiah and Eliah and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham ” (1 Chron. viii, 27), which names the *Midrash* assigns to the prophet Eliah (*Shemoth Rabba*, cap. xl), this prophet is introduced as speaking and teaching under the four names of Eliah b. Josep, Jaresiah b. Joseph, Zechariah b. Joseph and Jeroham b. Joseph. Having stated that the secret and profounder views of the Deity are only to be communicated to the God-fearing, and that none but the pre-eminently pious can enter into the temple of this higher gnosis, the prophet Elias propounds the system of this secret doctrine, which consists in the following maxims—  
I. God at first created light and darkness, the one for the pious and the other for the wicked, darkness having come to pass by the divine limitation of light. II. God produced and destroyed sundry worlds, which, like ten trees planted upon a narrow space, contend about the sap of the soil, and finally perish altogether. III. God manifested himself in four worlds,

3 עוד יש בידינו קבלה של אמת כי כל התורה כולה שמותיו של הקב"ה שהתיבו' מתחלקות לשמות בענין אחר כאלו החשוב על דרך משל כי פסוק בראשית יתחלק לחיבות אחרות כגון בראש 'חברא אלהים וכל התורה כי מלבד צירופיהן וג'מטריותיהן של שמות.



viz.—*Atzilah*, *Beriah*, *Jetzira* and *Asiah*, corresponding to the Tetragrammaton יהוה. In the *Atzilatic luminous world* is the divine majesty, the Shechinah. In the *Briatic world* are the souls of the saints, all the blessings, the throne of the Deity, he who sits on it in the form of Achtenal (the crown of God, the first *Sephira*), and the seven different luminous and splendid regions. In the *Jetziratic world* are the sacred animals from the vision of Ezekiel, the ten classes of angels with their princes, who are presided over by the fiery Metatron, the spirits of men, and the accessory work of the divine chariot. In the *Asiatic world* are the Ophanim, the angels who receive the prayers, who are appointed over the will of man, who control the action of mortals, who carry on the struggle against evil, and who are presided over by the angelic prince Synandelphon. IV. The world was founded in wisdom and understanding (Prov. iii, 19), and God in his knowledge originated fifty gates of understanding. V. God created the world by means of the *ten Sephiroth*, which are both the agencies and qualities of the Deity. The *ten Sephiroth* are called Crown, Wisdom, Intelligence, Mercy, Fear, Beauty, Victory, Majesty and Kingdom: they are ideal and stand above the concrete world.”<sup>4</sup>

6. Jacob ben Sheshet of Gerona (flour. 1243). He wrote a Kabbalistic Treatise in rhymed prose, entitled שער השמים *the Gate of Heaven*, after Gen. xxviii, 17. It was first published by Gabriel Warshawer in his collection of eight Kabbalistic Essays, called ספר לקוטים בקבלה. Warsaw, 1798. It forms the third Essay in this collection, and is erroneously entitled לקוטי שם טוב *the Collection of Shem Tob*. It has now been published under its proper title, from a codex by

<sup>4</sup> This remarkable Treatise was first published by R. Abraham, Vilna, 1802; it was then reprinted with all its faults in Lemberg, 1850. The erudite and indefatigable Dr. Jellinek has now reprinted it in his *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik*, part i, Leipzig, 1853, and the above analysis is from the Introduction to this excellent edition.



Mordecai Mortera, in the Hebrew Essays and Reviews, entitled *Ozar Nechmad* (אוצר נחמד) vol. iii, p. 153, &c. Vienna, 1860.

The characteristic feature of this school, which is the creative school, is that it for the first time established and developed the doctrine of *the En Soph* (אין סוף) *the Sephiroth* (ספירות) or *Emanations*, metempsychosis (סוד העבור) with the doctrine of retribution (סוד הנמול) belonging thereto, and a peculiar christology, whilst the Kabbalistic mode of exegesis is still subordinate in it.

II.—THE SCHOOL OF SEGOVIA, so called because it was founded by Jacob of Segovia, and its disciples were either natives of this place or lived in it. The chief representatives of this school are—

1, Isaac, and 2, Jacob, junior, the two sons of Jacob Segovia, and 3, Moses b. Simon of Burgos, who are only known by sundry fragments preserved in Kabbalistic writings.

4. Todras b. Joseph Ha-Levi Abulafia, born 1234, died circa 1305. This celebrated Kabbalist occupied a distinguished position as physician and financier in the court of Sancho IV, King of Castile, and was a great favourite of Queen Maria de Moline; he formed one of the *cortége* when this royal pair met Philip IV, *the Fair*, King of France in Bayonne (1290), and his advocacy of this theosophy secured for the doctrines of the Kabbalah a kindly reception. His works on the Kabbalah are—(a) An Exposition of the Talmudic Hagadoth, entitled אוצר הכבוד, (b) A Commentary on Ps. xix, and (c) A Commentary on the Pentateuch, in which he propounds the tenets of the Kabbalah. These works, however, have not as yet been printed.<sup>5</sup>

5. Shem Tob b. Abraham Ibn Gaon, born 1283, died circa 1332, who wrote many Kabbalistic works.

6. Isaac of Akko (flour. 1290) author of the Kabbalistic

<sup>5</sup> Steinschneider, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, 2677-2680. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vii, 218, &c.

Commentary on the Pentateuch, entitled מאירת ענים not yet printed, with the exception of an extract published by Jellinek.<sup>6</sup>

The characteristic of this school is that it is devoted to exegesis, and its disciples endeavoured to interpret the Bible and the Hagada in accordance with the doctrines of the Kabbalah.

III.—THE QUASI-PHILOSOPHIC SCHOOL of Isaac b. Abraham Ibn-Latif, or Allatif. He was born about 1270 and died about 1390. Believing that to view Judaism from an exclusively philosophical stand-point does not shew “the right way to the sanctuary,” he endeavoured to combine philosophy with Kabbalah. “He laid greater stress than his predecessors on the close connection and intimate union between the spiritual and material world, between the Creator and the creation—God is in all and everything is in him. The human soul rises to the world-soul in earnest prayer, and unites itself therewith ‘in a kiss,’ operates upon the Deity and brings down a divine blessing upon the nether world. But as every mortal is not able to offer such a spiritual and divinely operative prayer, the prophets, who were the most perfect men, had to pray for the people, for they alone knew the power of prayer. Isaac Allatif illustrated the unfolding and self-revelation of the Deity in the world of spirits by mathematical forms. The mutual relation thereof is the same as that of the point extending and thickening into a line, the line into the flat, the flat into the expanded body. Henceforth the Kabbalists used points and lines in their mystical diagrams as much as they employed the numerals and letters of the alphabet.”<sup>7</sup>

IV. THE SCHOOL OF ABULAFIA, founded by Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia, is represented by—

<sup>6</sup> Comp. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*, von Adolph Jellinek, part ii, Leipzig, 1852, p. xiii, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Comp. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, p. 221, &c.

1. Abulafia, the founder of it, who was born at Saragossa in 1240, and died circa 1292. For thirty years he devoted himself to the study of the Bible, the Talmud, philology, philosophy, and medicine, making himself master of the philosophical writings of Saadia, Bachja b. Joseph, Maimonides, and Antoli, as well as of the Kabbalistic works which were then in existence. Finding no comfort in philosophy, he gave himself entirely to the mysteries of the Kabbalah in their most fantastic extremes, as the ordinary doctrine of *the Sephiroth* did not satisfy him. The ordinary doctrine of *the Sephiroth* he simply regarded as *a ten unity* instead of the Christian *three unity*. Through divine inspiration, he discovered a higher Kabbalah, by means of which the soul can not only hold the most intimate communion with the world-soul, but obtain the prophetic faculty. The simple intercourse with the world of spirits, which is effected by separating the words of Holy Writ, and especially those of the divine name, into letters, and by regarding each letter as a distinct word (נוטריקון), or by transposing the component parts of words in every possible way to obtain thereby peculiar expressions (צירוף), or by taking the letters of each word as numerals (גמטריא), is not sufficient. To have the prophetic faculty and to see visions ought to be the chief aim, and these are secured by leading an ascetic life, by banishing all worldly feelings, by retiring into a quiet closet, by dressing oneself in white apparel, by putting on the fringed garment and the phylacteries; by sanctifying the soul so as to be fit to hold converse with the Deity; by pronouncing the letters composing the divine name with certain modulations of the voice and divine pauses; by exhibiting the divine names in various diagrams under divers energetic movements, turnings, and bendings of the body, till the voice gets confused and the heart is filled with fervour. When one has gone through these practices and is in such a condition, the fulness of the



Godhead is shed abroad in the human soul: the soul then unites itself with the divine soul in a kiss, and prophetic revelations follow as a matter of course.

He went to Italy, published, in Urbino (1279), a prophecy, in which he records his conversations with the Deity, calling himself Raziel and Zechariah, because these names are numerically the same as his own name, Abraham,<sup>8</sup> and preached the doctrines of the Kabbalah. In 1281 he had a call from God to convert the Pope, Martin IV, to Judaism, for which he was thrown into prison, and narrowly escaped a martyr's death by fire. Seeing that his Holiness refused to embrace the Jewish religion, Abulafia went to Sicily, accompanied by several of his disciples. In Messina another revelation from God was vouchsafed to him, announcing to him that he was the Messiah, which he published 1284. This apocalypse also announced that the restoration of Israel would take place in 1296; and so great was the faith which the people reposed in it, that thousands prepared themselves for returning to Palestine. Those, however, who did not believe in the Messiahship and in the Kabbalah of Abulafia, raised such a violent storm of opposition against him, that he had to escape to the island of Comino, near Malta (*circa* 1288), where he remained for some time, and wrote sundry Kabbalistic works.

His Kabbalistic system may be gathered from the following analysis of his Rejoinder to R. Solomon ben Abraham ben Adereth, who attacked his doctrines and Messianic as well as prophetic pretensions. "There are," says Abulafia, "four sources of knowledge—I, The five senses, or experimental maxims; II, Abstract numbers or *à priori* maxims; III, The generally acknowledged maxims, or *consensus communis*;

<sup>8</sup> This will be seen from the reduction of the respective names to their numerical value by the rule *Gematria*, viz.:— $\aleph 30 + \aleph 1 + \iota 10 + \iota 7 \gamma 200 = 248$ ;  
 $\iota 6 + \aleph 5 + \iota 10 + \gamma 200 + \aleph 30 + \iota 7 = 248$ ;  
 and  $\aleph 40 + \aleph 5 + \gamma 200 + \iota 2 + \aleph 1 = 248$ .

and IV, Transmitted doctrines or traditional maxims. The Kabbalistic tradition, which goes back to Moses, is divisible into two parts, the first of which is superior to the second in value, but subordinate to it in the order of study. The first part is occupied with the knowledge of the Deity, obtained by means of the doctrine of *the Sephiroth*, as propounded in the *Book Jetzira*. The followers of this part are related to those philosophers who strive to know God from his works, and the Deity stands before them objectively as a light beaming into their understanding. These, moreover, give to *the Sephiroth* sundry names to serve as signs for recognition ; and some of this class differ but little from Christians, inasmuch as they substitute a *decade* for the *triad*, which they identify with God, and which they learned in the school of Isaac the Blind.

The second and more important part strives to know God by means of the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, from which, together with the vowel points and accents, those sundry divine names are combined, which elevate the Kabbalists to the degree of prophecy, drawing out their spirit, and causing it to be united with God and to become one with the Deity. This is gradually effected in the following manner. The *ten Sephiroth* sublimates gradually to the upper *Sephira*, called *thought*, *crown*, or *primordial air*, which is the root of all the other *Sephiroth*, and reposes in the creative *En Soph*. In the same manner all the numerals are to be traced back to one, and all the trees, together with their roots and branches, are converted into their original earth as soon as they are thrown into the fire. To the *ten Sephiroth*, consisting of upper, middle and lower, correspond the letters of the alphabet, which are divided into three rows of ten letters each, the final letters inclusive, beginning and ending with *Aleph* ; as well as the human body, with its head, the two arms, loins, testicles, liver, heart, brain, all of which unite into a higher unity and become one in the active *νοῦς*, which in its

turn again unites itself with God, as the unity to which everything must return.

The *ten Sephiroth* are after a higher conception, to be traced to a higher triad, which correspond to the letters *Aleph*, *Beth*, *Gimmel*, and the three principles combined in man, the vital in the heart, the vegetable in the liver, and the pleasurable in the brain, and also form themselves in a higher unity. It is in this way that the Kabbalist who is initiated into the *prophetic Kabbalah* may gradually concentrate all his powers direct to one point to God, and unite himself with the Deity, for which purpose the ideas developed in unbroken sequence, from the permutations of numbers and letters, will serve him as steps upon which to ascend to God.”<sup>9</sup>

Abulafia wrote no less than twenty-six grammatical, exegetical, mystical and Kabbalistic works, and twenty-two prophetic treatises. And though these productions are of great importance to the history of the literature and development of the Kabbalah, yet only two of them, viz., the above-named *Epistle to R. Solomon* and the *Epistle to R. Abraham*, entitled *the Seven Paths of the Law* (שבע נתיבות התורה), have as yet been published.

2. Joseph Gikatilla b. Abraham (flour. 1260), disciple of Abulafia. He wrote in the interests and defence of this school the following works:—i. A Kabbalistic work entitled *the Garden of Nuts* (גנת אנוח), consisting of three parts, and treating respectively on the import of the divine names, on the mysteries of the Hebrew letters, and on the vowel points. It was published at Hanau, 1615. ii. The import of the vowel points entitled *the Book on Vowels* (ספר הניקוד), or *the Gate to the Points* (שער הניקוד), published in the collection of seven treatises, called *the Cedars of Lebanon*

<sup>9</sup> This Epistle of Abulafia has been published by Jellinek in his *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik*, part i. p. 13, &c., Leipzig, 1853, who also gives the above analysis, which we have translated as literally as possible.



(ארזי לבנון), Venice, 1601, and Cracow, 1648, of which it is the third treatise. iii. *The Mystery of the Shining Metal* (סוד החשמל), being a Kabbalistic exposition of the first chapter of Ezekiel, also published in the preceding seven treatises, of which it is the fourth. iv. *The Gate of Light* (שער אורה), being a treatise on the names of the Deity and the *ten Sephiroth*, first published in Mantua, 1561; then Riva de Trento, 1561; Cracow, 1600. A Latin version of it by Knorr von Rosenroth is given in the first part of the *Cabbala Denudata*, Sulzbach, 1677-78. v. *The Gates of Righteousness* (שערי צדק), on the ten divine names answering to the *ten Sephiroth*, published at Riva de Trento, 1561. vi. *Mysteries* (סודות) connected with sundry Pentateuchal ordinances, published by Jechiel Ashkenazi in his *Temple of the Lord* (היכל יהוה), Venice and Dantzic, 1596-1606.<sup>10</sup>

From the above description it will be seen that the characteristic features of this school are the stress which its followers lay on the extensive use of the exegetical rules called *Gematria* (גמטריא), *Notaricon* (נוטריקון), and *Ziruph* (צירוף), in the exposition of the divine names and Holy Writ, as well as in the claim to prophetic gifts. It must, however, be remarked that in this employment of commutations, permutations and reduction of each letter in every word to its numerical value, Abulafia and his followers are not original.

V. THE SOHAR SCHOOL, which is a combination and absorption of the different features and doctrines of all the previous schools, without any plan or method.

1236-1315. Less than a century after its birth the Kabbalah became known among Christians through the restless efforts of Raymond Lully, the celebrated scholastic metaphysician and experimental chemist. This *Doctor illuminatus*, as he was styled, in consequence of his great learning and

<sup>10</sup> Comp. Jellinek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*, part ii, p. 60, &c.; Steinschneider, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Col. 1461-1470.

piety, was born about 1236 at Palma, in the island of Majorca. He relinquished the military service and writing erotic poetry when about thirty, and devoted himself to the study of theology. Being inspired with an ardent zeal for the conversion of the Mohammedans and the Jews to Christianity, he acquired a knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew for this purpose. In pursuing his Hebrew studies Lully became acquainted with the mysteries of the Kabbalah, and, instead of converting his Kabbalistic teachers, he embraced the doctrine of "the identity of the Deity and nature;"<sup>11</sup> and there is very little doubt that the Kabbalistic method of palming their notions on the text of Scripture, by means of the *Gematria*, *Noturicon* and *Ziruph*, suggested to him the invention of *the Great Art* (ARS MAGNA). It is therefore not to be wondered at that he had the loftiest conception of the Kabbalah, that he regarded it as a divine science and as a genuine revelation whose light is revealed to a rational soul.<sup>12</sup> It cannot be said that Lully derived as much benefit from the Mohammedans, for after making three perilous journeys to Africa to bring the sons of Ishmael to the truth of Christianity, he was stoned to death by them, June 30, 1315.

The new era in the development of the Kabbalah, created by the appearance of the *Sohar*, has continued to the present day, for nearly all those who have since espoused the doctrines of this theosophy have made the *Sohar* their text-book, and the principal writers have contented themselves more or less with writing commentaries on this gigantic pseudonym.

1290-1350. Foremost among these is Menahem di Recanti, who was born in Recanti (Latin Recinetum) about 1290. He wrote, when about forty years of age (1330), a commentary

11 Comp. Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. viii. p. 837.

12 Dicitur haec doctrina Kabbala quod idem est secundum Hebraeos ut receptio veritatis cujuslibet rei divinitus revelatae animae rationali. . . . Est igitur Kabbala habitus anima rationalis ex rectâ ratione divinarum rerum cognitivus; propter quod est de maximo etiam divino consuetudine divina scientia vocari debet. Comp. *De Auditu Kabbalistico, sive ad omnes scientias introdutorium*. Strasburg, 1651.

on the Pentateuch, which is little else than a commentary on the *Sohar*. This commentary—which was first published by Jacob b. Chajim in Bomberg's celebrated printing establishment, Venice, 1523, then again, *ibid*, 1545, and in Lublin, 1595—has been translated into Latin by the famous Pico della Mirandola.<sup>13</sup>

1320. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Joseph b. Abraham Ibn Wakkar (flour. 1290-1340) endeavoured to reconcile this theosophy with philosophy, and to this end wrote a Treatise on the cardinal doctrines of the Kabbalah, which is regarded as one of the best if not the best introductory compendium. This production, which is unpublished, and a MS. of which exists in the Bodleian Library (Codex Laud. 119 ; described by Uri No. 384), consists of four parts or *Gates*, subdivided into chapters, as follows :—

GATE I, which is entitled, *On the views of the Kabbalists respecting the Primary Cause, blessed be he, and the Sephiroth, as well as their names and order*, consists of eight chapters, treating respectively on the fundamental doctrines of the emanations of the *Sephiroth* from the First Cause, as transmitted from Abraham and indicated in the Bible and the Rabbinic writings in *Gematrias* (cap. i) ; on the unity of the *Sephiroth* (cap. ii) ; the relation of the *Sephiroth* to each other, the First Cause itself being a trinity consisting of a threefold light, the number of the *Sephiroth* being from 10, 20, 30 and so on up to 310, stating that there is a difference of opinion amongst the Kabbalists whether the Primary Cause is within or without the *Sephiroth* (cap. iii) ; on the three worlds of the *Sephiroth* (cap. iv) ; on the beginninglessness of the first and necessary first Emanation, investigating the question as to how many *Sephiroth* this property extends (cap. v) ; on

<sup>13</sup> For the other works of Recanti, both published and unpublished, as well as for the exact date of his literary labours, we must refer to Steinschneider, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Col. 1733-1737 ; and to Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. iii, pp. 135, 136.



the subordination and order of the *Sephiroth* and the diagrams, mentioning, in addition to the three known ones, the figure of bridegroom and bride under the nuptial canopy (cap. vi) ; on the names of the Deity and the angels derived from the *Sephiroth* (cap. vii) ; on the unclean (demon) *Sephiroth* or Hells (קליפות) and their relation to the pure ones (cap. viii).

GATE II, which is entitled, *On the influence of the Sephiroth on the government of the world (Providence)*, consists of six chapters, treating respectively on the relation of the *Sephiroth* to the fundamental characteristics of Providence, such as mercy, justice, &c. (cap. i) ; on the corresponding relations of the unclean *Sephiroth* (cap. ii) ; on the influence of the *Sephiroth* on men, especially on the Hebrew race, and their vicissitudes (caps. iii and iv) ; on the possibility of the *Sephiroth* withholding this influence (cap. v) ; and on the relation of the *Sephiroth* to the days of the week (cap. vi).

GATE III; which is entitled, *On the names of the Sephiroth among the Kabbalists*, and which is the most extensive part of the work, consists of seven chapters, treating respectively on the names of the Deity, giving the sundry explanations of אלהים אשר אלהים current among the Jewish philosophers (cap. 1) ; on the names of the *Sephiroth*, stating that there is no uniform principle among the Kabbalists ; that the appellations are derived from the Bible, the Talmud and later literati ; that the greatest difference of opinion prevails among the Kabbalists as to the mode in which these ancient sources are to be interpreted, recommending the following works as reliable guides : the Talmud, Midrash Rabbah, Siphra, Siphri, Bahir, Perakim of R. Eliezer, the opinions of Nachmanides and Todros Ha-Levi Abulafia of honoured memory, but guarding against the *Sohar*, because “ *many blunders occur therein* (cap. ii) ; on the import of the names of the *Sephiroth*, with examples of interpretation of the Bible and Talmud

to serve as aids for the student who is to prosecute the work according to these examples, mentioning three explanations of the word *Sephira* (cap. iii) ; on the divine names occurring in the Pentateuch (cap. iv) ; on the masculine and feminine nature of the *Sephiroth* (cap. v) ; this is followed (cap. vi) by an alphabetical dictionary of the names of the *Sephiroth*, giving under each letter the Biblical and the corresponding Talmudic appellation appropriated by the Kabbalists to the *Sephiroth* ; and (cap. vii) by an index of the names of each *Sephira* in alphabetical order without any explanation.

GATE IV, which is entitled *On the positive proofs of the existence of the Kabbalah*, describes the author's own views of the Kabbalistic system, and submits that the Kabbalist has a preference over the philosopher and astronomer by virtue of the acknowledged maxim that he has a thorough knowledge of a thing who knows most details about it. Now the Kabbalists build their system upon the distinction of words, letters, &c., &c., in the sacred writings ; and they also explain certain formularies among the Rabbins, which have undoubtedly a recondite sense.<sup>14</sup>

1370-1500. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Kabbalah took deep root in Spain. Its followers, who were chiefly occupied with the study of *the Sohar*, with editing some older works, and with writing Kabbalistic commentaries on the Bible, became more and more aggressive, denouncing in unmeasured terms their co-religionists who could not see the advantages of this secret doctrine. Thus Abraham b. Isaac of Granada—who wrote (1391-1409) a Kabbalistic work entitled *The Covenant of Peace*, discussing

<sup>14</sup> The MS. of Ibn Wakkar's Treatise is minutely described by Uri (No 384). It is written in a character resembling the later German Hebrew, is furnished with references to the passages in the Bible and verbal translations in Latin, and contains such clerical blunders as no Hebrew copyist would commit. The above analysis of it is taken from the article in *Ersch und Gruber's Allgemeine Encyclopädie*, section ii, vol. xxxi, p. 100, &c., written by the erudite Steinschneider. For the other Kabbalistic works of Ibn Wakkar we must refer to the same elaborate article.

the mysteries of the names of God and the angels, of permutations, commutations, the vowel points and accents—declares that he who does not acknowledge God in the manner of the Kabbalah sins unwittingly, is not regarded by God, has not his special providence, and, like the abandoned and the wicked, is left to fate.<sup>15</sup>

Similar in import and tone are the writings of Shem Tob Ibn Shem Tob (died 1430). In his Treatise, entitled *the Book of Faithfulness*, which is an attack on the Jewish philosophers Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Levi b. Gershon, &c., and a defence of the Kabbalah, Shem Tob denounces the students of philosophy as heretics, and maintains that the salvation of Israel depends upon the Kabbalah. He also wrote Homilies on the Pentateuch, the Feasts and Fasts, &c., in which the Kabbalistic doctrines are fully propounded.<sup>16</sup>

Moses Botarel or Botarelo, also a Spaniard, wrote at this time (1409) his commentary on the famous *Book Jetzira*, an analysis of which is given in the foregoing part of this Essay (*vide supra*, p. 147, &c.) Unlike Abraham of Granada and Shem Tob, his two contemporary champions of the Kabbalah, he praises philosophy, speaks of Aristotle as of a prophet, and maintains that philosophy and the Kabbalah propound exactly the same doctrines, and that they only differ in language and in technical terms. In this commentary, which he wrote to instruct the Christian scholar Maestro Juan in the Kabbalah, Botarel shows how, by fasting, ablations, prayer, invocation of divine and angelic names, a man may have such dreams as shall disclose to him the secrets of the future. In confirmation of his opinions he quotes such ancient authorities as Rab Ashi, Saadia Gaon, Hai Gaon, &c., whom the Kabbalah claims as its great

15 This ספר מנוחה has been published in Amsterdam, 1648.

16 The ספר אמונות consists of eleven parts, subdivided into chapters; and was published in Ferrara, 1557; the Homilies, entitled רישות על התורה were first published in Venice, 1547, and then in Padua, 1567.



pillars.<sup>17</sup> It is almost needless to remark that these men lived long before the birth of the Kabbalah, and that this mode of palming comparatively modern opinions upon great men of remote ages, has also been adopted by advocates of other systems who were anxious to invest their views with the halo of antiquity.

As countrymen of the foregoing writers, and as exponents of the opinions of older Kabbalists, are to be mentioned— (i) Jehudah Chajath who was among the large number of Jews expelled from Spain in 1493, and who wrote a commentary on the Kabbalistic work, entitled *The Divine Order*;<sup>18</sup> and (ii) Abraham Ibn Sabba, who was banished with thousands of his brethren from Lisbon, 1499, and who is the author of a very extensive commentary on the Pentateuch, entitled *The Bundle of Myrrh*, in which he largely avails himself of the *Sohar* and other earlier Kabbalistic works.<sup>19</sup>

1463-1494. The Kabbalah, which soon after its birth became partially known to Christians through Raymond Lully, was now accessible to Christian scholars through the exertions and influence of the famous Count John Pico di Mirandola (born in 1463). This celebrated philosopher determined to fathom the mysteries of the Kabbalah, and for this purpose put himself under the tuition of a Jew, R. Jochanan Aleman, who came to Italy from Constantinople. His extraordinary intellectual powers soon enabled Mirandola to overcome the difficulties and to unravel the secrets of this theosophy. His labours were greatly rewarded; for, according to his shewing,

17 Botarel's Commentary on the *Book Jetzira* was first published with the text of this book and other commentaries, Mantua, 1562; then Zolkiev, 1745; and in Grodno, 1806, 1820.

18 The *מנחת יהודה* which is a Commentary on the *מסכת האלהו* was published together with it in Ferrara, 1558.

19 The Commentary *צורח המור* was first published at Constantinople, 1514; then in Venice, 1523, 1546, 1566; and in Cracow 1595. Pellican has translated this Commentary into Latin, and the MS. of this version is in the Zurich Library.

he found that<sup>20</sup> there is more Christianity in the Kabbalah than Judaism; he discovered in it proof for the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the divinity of Christ, original sin, the expiation thereof by Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the fall of the angels, the order of the angels, purgatory and hell-fire; in fact the same Gospel which we find in St. Paul, Dionysius, St. Jerome and St. Augustine. As the result of his Kabbalistic studies Mirandola published, in 1486, when only twenty-four years of age, *nine hundred Theses*, which were placarded in Rome, and which he undertook to defend in the presence of all European scholars, whom he invited to the eternal city, promising to defray their travelling expenses. Among these *Theses* was the following, “*No science yields greater proof of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Kabbalah.*”<sup>21</sup> Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) was so delighted with it that he greatly exerted himself to have Kabbalistic writings translated into Latin for the use of divinity students.<sup>22</sup> Mirandola accordingly translated the following three works: 1, Menahem di Recanti's Commentary on the Pentateuch, erroneously called *R. Levi de Recineto* (Wolf, *ibid*, p. 10); 2, Eliezer of Worms' חכמת הנפש *de Scientia animae*; and 3, Shem Tob Falaquera's ספר המעלות

1455-1522. Not only did Mirandola make the Kabbalah known to the Christians in Italy, but he was the means of introducing it into Germany through John Reuchlin, the

20 Vidi in illis (testis est Deus) religionem non tam Mosaicam quam Christianam; ibi Trinitatis mysterium; ibi verbi Incarnatio, ibi Messiae divinitates; ibi de peccato originali, de illius per Christum expiatione, de cælesti Hierusalem, de casu dæmonum, de ordinibus Angelorum, de Purgatoriis, de Inferorum poenis; Eadem legi, quæ apud Paulum et Dionysium, apud Hieronymum et Augustinum quotidie legimus. *Comp. Index a Jacobo Gaffarello*, published by Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. i, p. 9 at the end of the volume.

21 Nulla est scientia, quæ nos magis certificet de divinitate Christi, quam magia et Cabbala, *vide Apologia*, p. 42, opp. vol. I. Basil, 1601.

22. Hic libri (Cabbalistorum) Sixtus IV, Pontifex maximus, qui hunc, sub quo vivimus feliciter, Innocentium VIII, proxime antecessit, maxima cura studioque curavit, ut in publicam fidei nostræ utilitarem, Latinis literis mandarentur, jamque cum ille decessit, tres ex illis pervenerant ad Latinos. *Vide Gaffarelli in Wolf, Bibliotheca Hebraea*, appendix to vol. i, p. 9.



father of the German Reformation. This eminent scholar,—who is also called by the Greek name *Capnion* (καπνίων), or *Capnio*, which is a translation of his German name REUCHLIN, *i.e. smoke*, in accordance with the fashion of the time; just as GERARD, signifying *amiable*, assumed the name of DESIDERIUS ERASMUS, and SCHWARTZERTH, denoting *black earth*, took the name of MELANCHTHON,—was born at Phorzheim December 28, 1455. At the age of seventeen he was called to the court of Baden, and received among the court singers in consequence of his beautiful voice. His brilliant attainments soon attracted notice, and he was sent (1473) with the young Margrave Frederick, eldest son of Charles II, afterwards bishop of Utrecht, to the celebrated high school of Paris. Here he acquired, from Hermonymus of Sparta and other fugitive Greek literati, who went to Paris after the taking of Constantinople (1453), that remarkable knowledge of Greek which enabled him so largely to amass the Attic lore and rendered him so famous through Europe. He went to Basle in 1474, delivered lectures on the Latin language and the classics, and had among his hearers nobles of high rank both from France and Germany. He went to Tübingen in 1481, where his fame secured for him the friendship of Eberhard the Bearded, who made him his private secretary and privy councillor, and as such this prince took Reuchlin with him to Rome in 1482; where he made that splendid Latin oration before the Pope and the cardinals, which elicited from his Holiness the declaration that Reuchlin deserved to be placed among the best orators of France and Italy. From Rome Eberhard took him to Florence, and it was here that Reuchlin became acquainted with the celebrated Mirandola and with the Kabbalah. But as he was appointed licentiate and assessor of the supreme court in Stuttgard, the new residence of Eberhard, on his return in 1484, and as the order of Dominicans elected him as their proctor in the whole of Germany,



Reuchlin had not time to enter at once upon the study of Hebrew and Aramaic, which are the key to the Kabbalah, and he had reluctantly to wait till 1492, when he accompanied Eberhard to the imperial court at Ling. Here he became acquainted with R. Jacob b. Jechiel Loanz, a learned Hebrew, and court physician of Frederick III, from whom he learned Hebrew.<sup>23</sup> Whereupon Reuchlin at once betook himself to the study of *the Kabbalah*, and within two years of his beginning to learn the language in which it is written, his first Kabbalistic treatise, entitled *De Verbo Mirifico* (Basle, 1494), appeared. This treatise is of the greatest rarity, and the following analysis of it is given by Franck. It is in the form of a dialogue between an Epicurean philosopher named Sidonius, a Jew named Baruch, and the author, who is introduced by his Greek name Capnio, and consists of three books, according to the number of speakers.

Book I, the exponent of which is Baruch the Jewish Kabbalist, is occupied with a refutation of the Epicurean doctrines, and simply reproduces the arguments generally urged against this system, for which reason we omit any further description of it.

Book II endeavours to shew that all wisdom and true philosophy are derived from the Hebrews, that Plato, Pythagoras and Zoroaster borrowed their ideas from the Bible, and that traces of the Hebrew language are to be found in the liturgies and sacred books of all nations. Then follows an explanation of the four divine names, which are shown to have been transplanted into the systems of Greek philosophy. The first and most distinguished of them אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר אֲדֹנָי *ego sum qui sum* (Exod. iii, 12), is translated in the Platonic philosophy by τὸ ὄντως ὄν. The second divine name, which we translate by אֵלֶּה HE, *i.e.*, the sign of unchangeableness and

<sup>23</sup> "Is (Jekiel Loanz) me, supra quam dici queat, fideliter literos Hebraicos primus edocuit." Comp. *Rudim. Hebr.* p. 3.

of the eternal idea of the Deity, is also to be found among the Greek philosophers in the term *ταυτόν*, which is opposed to *σάτερόν*. The third name of God used in Holy Writ is **שם** FIRE. In this form God appeared in the burning bush when he first manifested himself to Moses. The prophets describe him as a burning fire, and John the Baptist depicts him as such when he says, "I baptize you with water, but he who cometh after me shall baptize you with fire." (Matt. iii, 11.) The fire of the Hebrew prophets is the same as the ether (*αι ἔηρ*) mentioned in the hymns of Orpheus. But these three names are in reality only one, showing to us the divine nature in three different aspects. Thus God calls himself *the Being*, because every existence emanates from him; he calls himself *Fire*, because it is he who illuminates and animates all things and he is always **HE**, because he always remains like himself amidst the infinite variety of his works. Now just as there are names which express the nature of the Deity, so there are names which refer to his attributes, and these are the *ten Sephiroth*. If we look away from every attribute and every definite point of view in which the divine subsistence may be contemplated, if we endeavour to depict the absolute Being as concentrating himself within himself, and not affording us any explicable relation to our intellect, he is then described by a name which it is forbidden to pronounce, by the thrice holy Tetragrammaton, the name Jehovah (**יהוה**) *the Shem Ha-Mephorash* (**שם המפורש**).

There is no doubt that the tetrad (*τετρακτύς*) of Pythagoras is an imitation of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, and that the worship of the decade has simply been invented in honour of the *ten Sephiroth*. The four letters composing this name represent the four fundamental constituents of the body (*i.e.*, heat, cold, dryness and humidity), the four geometrical principal points (*i.e.*, the point, the line, flat and body), the four notes of the musical scale, the four rivers in the earthly



paradise, the four symbolical figures in the vision of Ezekiel, &c., &c., &c. Moreover if we look at these four letters separately we shall find that each of them has equally a recondite meaning. The first letter י, which also stands for the number *ten*, and which by its form reminds us of the mathematical point, teaches us that God is the beginning and end of all things. The number *five*, expressed by ה the second letter, shows us the union of God with nature—of God inasmuch as he is depicted by the number three, *i.e.*, the Trinity; and of visible nature, inasmuch as it is represented by Plato and Pythagoras under the dual. The number *six*, expressed by ו, the third letter, which is likewise revered in the Pythagorean school, is formed by the combination of one, two, and three, the symbol of all perfection. Moreover the number *six* is the symbol of the cube, the bodies (*solida*), or the world. Hence it is evident that the world has in it the imprint of divine perfection. The fourth and last letter of this divine name (וה) is like the second, represents the number *five*, and here symbolizes the human and rational soul, which is the medium between heaven and earth, just as five is the centre of the decade, the symbolic expression of the totality of things.

Book III, the exponent of which is Capnio, endeavours to shew that the most essential doctrines of Christianity are to be found by the same method. Let a few instances of this method suffice. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the first verse of Genesis. If the Hebrew word ברא which is translated *created*, be examined, and if each of the three letters composing this word be taken as the initial of a separate word, we obtain the expressions בן רוח אב *Son, Spirit, Father*. Upon the same principle we find the two persons of the Trinity in the words, "the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" (Ps. cxviii, 22), inasmuch as the three letters composing the



word **אבן** *stone*, are to be divided into **אב** *Father*, **בן** *Son*. Orpheus, in his hymn on the night, described the Trinity of the New Testament in the words, *νύξ, οὐρανός, αἴθηρ*, for night which begets everything can only designate *the Father*; heaven, that Olympus which in its boundlessness embraces all things, and which proceeded from the night, signifies *the Son*; whilst ether, which the ancient poet also designates *fiery breath*, is the *Holy Ghost*. The name Jesus in Hebrew **יהושע** the *πενταγράμματον* yields the name **יהוה** *Jehovah*; and the **ו** which in the language of the Kabbalah is the symbol of fire or light, which St. Jerome, in his mystical exposition of the alphabet, has made the sign of the *Λόγος*. This mysterious name therefore contains a whole revelation, inasmuch as it shows us that Jesus is God himself, the Light or the *Logos*. Even the cross, which is the symbol of Christianity, is plainly indicated in the Old Testament, by the tree of life which God planted in the midst of the garden; by the praying attitude of Moses, when he raised his hands towards heaven in his intercession for Israel during the combat with Amalek; and by the tree which converted the bitter waters into sweet in the wilderness of Marah.<sup>24</sup>

The Treatise *de Verbo Mirifico* is, however, only an introduction to another work on the same subject which Reuchlin published twenty-two years later, entitled *De Arte Cabalistica*. Hagenau, 1516. This Treatise, like the first, is in the form of a dialogue between a Mohammedan named Marrianus, a Pythagorean Philosopher named Philolaus, and a Jewish doctor named Simon. The dialogue is held in Frankfort, where the Jew resides, to whom the Mohammedan and Pythagorean resort to be initiated into the mysteries of the Kabbalah. The whole is a more matured exposition and elaboration of the ideas hinted at in his first work.

<sup>24</sup> Comp. Franck, *Die Kabbalah oder die Religion Philosophie der Hebräer* übersetzt von Jellinek. Leipzig, 1844, p. 8, &c.

The Kabbalah, according to Reuchlin, is a symbolical reception of Divine revelation; and a distinction is to be made between *Cabalici*, to whom belongs heavenly inspiration, their disciples *Cabalaai*, and their imitators *Cabalistae*. The design of the Kabbalah is to propound the relations of the absolute Creator to the creature. God is the Creator of all beings which emanated from him, and he implanted aspirations in them to attain actual communion with him. In order that feeble man might attain this communion, God revealed himself to mankind in various ways, but especially to Moses. This Divine revelation to Moses contains far more than appears on the surface of the Pentateuch. There is a recondite wisdom concealed in it which distinguishes it from other codes of morals and precepts. There are in the Pentateuch many pleonasms and repetitions of the same things and words, and as we cannot charge God with having inserted useless and superfluous words in the Holy Scriptures, we must believe that something more profound is contained in them, to which the Kabbalah gives the key.

This key consists in permutations, commutations, &c., &c. But this act of exchanging and arranging letters, and of interpreting for the edification of the soul the Holy Scriptures, which we have received from God as a divine thing not to be understood by the multitude, was not communicated by Moses to everybody, but to the elect, such as Joshua, and so by tradition it came to the seventy interpreters. This gift is called *Kabbalah*. God, out of love to his people, has revealed hidden mysteries to some of them, and these have found the living spirit in the dead letter; that is to say, the Scriptures consist of separate letters, visible signs which stand in a certain relation to the angels as celestial and spiritual emanations from God; and by pronouncing them, the latter also are affected. To a true Kabbalist, who has an insight into the whole connection of the terrestrial with the celestial, these

signs thus put together are the means of placing him in close union with spirits, who are thereby bound to fulfil his wishes.<sup>25</sup>

The extraordinary influence which Reuchlin's Kabbalistic Treatises exercised upon the greatest thinkers of the time and upon the early reformers may be judged of from the unmeasured terms of praise which they bestowed upon their author. The Treatises were regarded as heavenly communications, revealing new divine wisdom. Conrad Leontarius, writing to Wimpheling on the subject, says—"I never saw anything more beautiful or admirable than this work (*i.e.*, *De Verbo Mirifico*), which easily convinces him who reads it that no philosopher, whether Jew or Christian, is superior to Reuchlin." Aegidius, general of the Eremites, wrote to the holy Augustine "that Reuchlin had rendered him, as well as the rest of mankind, happy by his works, which had made known to all a thing hitherto unheard of." Philip Beroaldus, the younger, sent him word "that Pope Leo X had read his Pythagorean book greedily, as he did all good books; afterwards the Cardinal de Medici had done so, and he himself should soon enjoy it."<sup>26</sup> Such was the interest which this newly-revealed Kabbalah created among Christians, that not only learned men but statesmen and warriors began to study the oriental languages, in order to be able to fathom the mysteries of this theosophy.

1450-1498. Whilst the Kabbalah was gaining such high favour amongst Christians both in Italy and Germany, through the exertions of Mirandola and Reuchlin, a powerful voice was raised among the Jews against *the Sohar*, the very Bible of this theosophy. Elia del Medigo, born at Candia, then in Venetia, 1450, of a German literary family, professor of

<sup>25</sup> Comp. *The Life and Times of John Reuchlin*, by Francis Besham, p. 102, &c.

<sup>26</sup> Vide *Life of John Reuchlin*, p. 108.



philosophy in the University of Padua, teacher of Pico de Mirandola, and a scholar of the highest reputation both among his Jewish brethren and among Christians, impugned the authority of *the Sohar*. In his philosophical Treatise on the nature of Judaism as a harmonizer between religion and philosophy, entitled *An Examination of the Law* (בחינת הדין), which he wrote December 29, 1491, he puts into the mouth of an antagonist to the Kabbalah the following three arguments against the genuineness of the *Sohar*: 1, Neither the Talmud, nor the Gaonim and Rabbins knew anything of the *Sohar* or of its doctrines; 2, The *Sohar* was published at a very late period; and 3, Many anachronisms occur in it, inasmuch as it describes later Amoraic authorities as having direct intercourse with the Tanaite R. Simon b. Jochai who belongs to an earlier period.<sup>27</sup>

1522-1570. The voice of Elia del Medigo and others, however, had no power to check the rapid progress of the Kabbalah, which had now found its way from Spain and Italy into Palestine and Poland, and penetrated all branches of life and literature. Passing over the host of minor advocates and teachers, we shall mention the two great masters in Palestine, who formed two distinct schools, distinguished by the prominence which they respectively gave to certain doctrines of the Kabbalah. The first of these is Moses Cordovero, also called *Remak* = רמ"ק from the acrostic of his name קורדוואירו *R. Moses Cordovero*. He was born in Cordova, 1522, studied the Kabbalah under his learned brother-in-law, Solomon Aleavez, and very soon became so distinguished as a Kabbalist and author that his fame travelled to Italy, where his works were greedily bought. His principal works are: 1, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, entitled *A Sombre* or *Sweet*

<sup>27</sup> The בחינת הדין was first published in a collection of diverse Treatises, in Basle, 1620-31; and then in Vienna, 1833, with an elaborate philosophical commentary by T. S. Reggio. The arguments against *the Sohar* are in this edition, p. 43.

*Light* (אור נערב) first published in Venice, 1587, then in Cracow, 1647, and in Fürth, 1701; 2, Kabbalistic reflections and comments on ninety-nine passages of the Bible, entitled *The Book of Retirement* (ספר נרשין), published in Venice, 1543; and 3, A large Kabbalistic work entitled *The Garden of Pomegranates* (פרדס רמונים), which consists of thirteen sections or gates (שערים) subdivided into chapters, and discusses *the Sephiroth*, the Divine names, the import and significance of the letters, &c., &c. It was first published in Cracow, 1591. Excerpts of it have been translated into Latin by Bartolucci, *Bibliotheca Magna Rabbinica*, vol. iv, p. 231, &c., and Knorr von Rosenroth, *Tractatus de Anima ex libro Pardes Rimmonim* in his *Cabbala Denudata*, Sulzbach, 1677.<sup>28</sup>

The peculiar feature of Cordovero is that he is chiefly occupied with the scientific speculations of the Kabbalah, or *the speculative Kabbalah* (קבלה עיונית), as it is called in the modern terminology of this esoteric doctrine, in contradistinction to *the wonder-working Kabbalah* (קבלה מעשית), keeping aloof to a great extent from the extravagances which we shall soon have to notice. In this respect therefore he represents the Kabbalah in its primitive state, as may be seen from the following specimen of his lucubrations on the nature of the Deity. "The knowledge of the Creator is different from that of the creature, since in the case of the latter, knowledge and the thing known are distinct, thus leading to subjects which are again separate from him. This is described by the three expressions—cogitation, the cogitator and the cogitated object. Now the Creator is himself knowledge, knowing and the known object. His knowledge does not consist in the fact that he directs his thoughts to things

<sup>28</sup> For the other works of Cordovero, both published and unpublished, we must refer to Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. i, p. 187, &c.; and Steinschneider, *Catalogus Libr. Hebr. in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, col. 1793, &c.



without him, since in comprehending and knowing himself, he comprehends and knows everything which exists. There is nothing which is not united with him, and which he does not find in his own substance. He is the archetype of all things existing, and all things are in him in their purest and most perfect form; so that the perfection of the creatures consists in the support whereby they are united to the primary source of his existence, and they sink down and fall from that perfect and lofty position in proportion to their separation from him."<sup>29</sup>

1534-1572. The opposite to this school is the one founded by Isaac Luria or Loria, also called *Ari* = ארי"י from the initials of his name יצחק ארי' *R. Isaac Ashkanazi*. He was born at Jerusalem 1534, and, having lost his father when very young, was taken by his mother to Kahira, where he was put by his rich uncle under the tuition of the best Jewish master. Up to his twenty-second year he was a diligent student of the Talmud and the Rabbinic lore, and distinguished himself in these departments of learning in a most remarkable manner. He then lived in retirement for about seven years to give free scope to his thoughts and meditations, but he soon found that simple retirement from collegiate studies did not satisfy him. He therefore removed to the banks of the Nile, where he lived in a sequestered cottage for several years, giving himself up entirely to meditations and reveries. Here he had constant interviews with the prophet Elias, who communicated to him sublime doctrines. Here, too, his soul ascended to heaven whenever he was asleep, and in the celestial regions held converse with the souls of the great teachers of bygone days. When thirty-six years of age (1570) the Prophet Elias appeared to him again and told him to go to Palestine, where his successor was awaiting him. Obedient to the command, he went to Safet, where he gathered

<sup>29</sup> *Pardes Rimmonim* = The Garden of Pomegranates, 55 a.



round him ten disciples, visited the sepulchres of ancient teachers, and there, by prostrations and prayers, obtained from their spirits all manner of revelations, so much so that he was convinced he was the Messiah b. Joseph and that he was able to perform all sorts of miracles. It was this part of the Kabbalah, *i.e.*, the ascetic and miraculous (קבלה מעשית), which Loria taught. His sentiments he delivered orally, as he himself did not write anything, except perhaps some marginal notes of a critical import in older books and MSS. His disciples treasured up his marvellous sayings, whereby they performed miracles and converted thousands to the doctrines of this theosophy.

1543-1620. The real exponent of Loria's Kabbalistic system is his celebrated disciple Chajim Vital, a descendant of a Calabrian family, who died in 1620 at the age of seventy-seven. After the demise of his teacher, Chajim Vital diligently collected all the MS. notes of the lectures which Loria's disciples had written down, from which, together with his own jottings, he produced the gigantic and famous system of the Kabbalah, entitled *the Tree of Life* (עץ החיים). This work, over which Vital laboured thirty years, was at first circulated in MS. copies, and every one of the Kabbalistic disciples had to pledge himself, under pain of excommunication, not to allow a copy to be made for a foreign land; so that for a time all the Codd. remained in Palestine. At last, however, this Thesaurus of the Kabbalah, which properly consists of six works, was published by J. Satanow at Zolkiev, 1772. New editions of it appeared in Korez, 1785; Sklow, 1800; Dobrowne, 1804; Stilikow, 1818; and Knorr von Rosenroth has translated into Latin a portion of that part of the great work which treats on *the doctrine of the metempsychosis* (הגלגולים).<sup>30</sup>

1558-1560. The circulation of Loria's work which gave

<sup>30</sup> For a description of the component parts of the עץ החיים as well as for an account of the sundry editions of the several parts, published at different times, we must refer to Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. iii, pp. 479-481.

an extraordinary impetus to the Kabbalah, and which gave rise to the new school and a separate congregation in Palestine, was not the only favourable circumstance which had arisen to advance and promulgate the esoteric doctrine. The *Sohar*, which since its birth had been circulated in MS., was now for the first time printed in Mantua, and thousands of people who had hitherto been unable to procure the MS. were thus enabled to possess themselves of copies.<sup>31</sup> It is, however, evident that with the increased circulation of these two Bibles of the Kabbalah, as the *Sohar* and Loria's *Etz Chajim* are called, there was an increased cry on the part of learned Jews against the doctrines propounded in them. Isaac b. Immanuel de Lates, the Rabbi of Pesaro, and the great champion for the Kabbalah, who prefixed a commendatory epistle to the *Sohar*, tells us most distinctly that some Rabbins wanted to prevent the publication of the *Sohar*, urging that it ought to be kept secret or be burned, because it tends to heretical doctrines.<sup>32</sup>

1571-1648. Of the numerous opponents to the Kabbalah which the *Sohar* and Loria's work called forth, Leo de Modena was by far the most daring, the most outspoken and the most powerful. This eminent scholar who is known to the Christian world by his celebrated *History of the Rites, Customs and Manners of the Jews*, which was originally written in Italian, published in Padua, 1640, and which has been translated into Latin, English, French, Dutch, &c., attacked the Kabbalah in two of his works. His first onslaught is on the doctrine of metempsychosis in his Treatise entitled *Ben David*. He composed this Treatise in 1635-36, at the request of David Finzi, of Egypt, and he demonstrates therein that this doctrine

31 An analysis of the *Sohar*, as well as a description of the different editions of it, are given in the second part of this Essay, p. 160, &c.

32 Comp. his Resp., ed. Vienna, 1860, p. 21, &c., מסק נגד הרבנים אשר בקשו, לעכב הדפסת הוזהר מפני המלכות על שריפה התלמוד; and again, *ibid.* p. 26, עוד יש מהם שהוסיפו סרה ואמרו כי העין בוזהר יביא למינות ולפיקן שעון ננייה או שריפה לבשר הקדש.



is of Gentile origin, and was rejected by the great men of the Jewish faith in bygone days, refuting at the same time the philosophico-theological arguments advanced in its favour.<sup>33</sup> It is, however, his second attack on this esoteric doctrine, in his work entitled *The Roaring Lion* (ארי נורא), which is so damaging to the Kabbalah. In this Treatise—which Leo de Modena composed in 1639, at the advanced age of sixty-eight, to reclaim Joseph Chamiz, a beloved disciple of his, who was an ardent follower of the Kabbalah—he shows that the books which propound this esoteric doctrine, and which are palmed upon ancient authorities, are pseudonymous; that the doctrines themselves are mischievous; and that the followers of this system are inflated with proud notions, pretending to know the nature of God better than anyone else, and to possess the nearest and best way of approaching the Deity.<sup>34</sup>

1623. The celebrated Hebraist, Joseph Solomon del Medigo (born 1591, died 1637),—a contemporary of the preceding writer, also employed his vast stores of erudition to expose this system. Having been asked by R. Serach for his views of the Kabbalah, del Medigo, in a masterly letter, written in 1623, shows up the folly of this esoteric doctrine, and the unreasonableness of the exegetical rules, whereby the followers of this system pretend to deduce it from the Bible.<sup>35</sup>

1635. We have seen that the information about the Kabbalah, which Mirandola and Reuchlin imparted to Christians, was chiefly derived from the writings of Recanti and Gikatilla. Now that the *Sohar* had been published, Joseph de Voisin

<sup>33</sup> This Treatise is published in the collection entitled שו"ת יקרים by Eliezar Ashkanazi, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1854.

<sup>34</sup> The ארי נורא was published by Dr. Julius Fürst, Leipzig, 1840. Leo de Modena's relation to the Kabbalah, the Talmud and Christianity is shown in an elaborate Introduction by Geiger in the מאמר מן קדמונה Berlin, 1856. See also the article LEO DE MODENA, in Alexander's edition of Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, vol. ii, p. 811.

<sup>35</sup> This Epistle, together with a German translation and learned notes, has been published by Geiger in his collection of sundry treatises, entitled *Melo Chofnajim*. Berlin, 1840.



determined to be the first to make some portions of it accessible to those Christian readers who did not understand the Aramaic in which this Thesaurus is written. Accordingly he translated some extracts of the *Sohar* which treat of the nature of the human soul.<sup>36</sup>

1652-1654. Just at the very time when some of the most distinguished Jews exposed the pretensions of the Kabbalah, and denounced the fanciful and unjustifiable rules of interpretation whereby its advocates tried to evolve it from the letters of the revealed law, the celebrated Athanasius Kircher, in a most learned and elaborate treatise on this subject, maintained that the Kabbalah was introduced into Egypt by no less a person than the patriarch Abraham; and that from Egypt it gradually issued all over the East, and intermixed with all religions and systems of philosophy. What is still more extraordinary is that this learned Jesuit, in thus exalting the Kabbalah, lays the greatest stress on that part of it which developed itself afterwards, viz., the combinations, transpositions and permutations of the letters, and does not discriminate between it and the speculations about the *En Soph*, the *Sephiroth*, &c., which were the original characteristics of this theosophy.<sup>37</sup> The amount of Eastern lore, however, which Kircher has amassed in his work will always remain a noble monument to the extensive learning of this Jesuit.

1645-1676. The wonder-working or practical branch of the Kabbalah (קבלה מעשית), as it is called, so elaborately propounded and defended by Kircher, which consists in the transpositions of the letters of the sundry divine names, &c., and which as we have seen constituted no part of the original Kabbalah, had now largely laid hold on the minds and fancies

36 Comp. Disputatio Cabalistica R. Israel filii Mosis de animâ, &c., adjectis commentariis ex *Zohar*. Paris, 1635.

37 Kircher's Treatise on the Kabbalah is contained in his stupendous work, entitled *Œdipus Ægyptiacus*, vol. ii, pp. 209-360. Rome, 1635.

of both Jews and Christians, and was producing among the former the most mournful and calamitous effects. The famous Kabbalist, Sabbatai Zevi, who was born in Smyrna, July, 1641, was the chief actor in this tragedy. When a child he was sent to a Rabbinic school, and instructed in the Law, the Mishna, the Talmud, the Midrashim, and the whole cycle of Rabbinic lore. So great were his intellectual powers, and so vast the knowledge he acquired, that when fifteen he betook himself to the study of the Kabbalah, rapidly mastered its mysteries, became peerless in his knowledge of "those things which were revealed and those things which were hidden;" and at the age of eighteen obtained the honourable appellation *sage* (סֵדֵק), and delivered public lectures, expounding the divine law and the esoteric doctrine before crowded audiences. At the age of twenty-four he gave himself out as the Messiah, the Son of David, and the Redeemer of Israel, pronouncing publicly the Tetragrammaton, which was only allowed to the high priests during the existence of the second Temple. Though the Jewish sages of Smyrna excommunicated him for it, he travelled to Salonica, Athens, Morea and Jerusalem, teaching the Kabbalah, proclaiming himself as the Messiah, anointing prophets and converting thousands upon thousands. So numerous were the believers in him, that in many places trade was entirely stopped; the Jews wound up their affairs, disposed of their chattels and made themselves ready to be redeemed from their captivity and led by Sabbatai Zevi back to Jerusalem. The consuls of Europe were ordered to enquire into this extraordinary movement, and the governors of the East reported to the Sultan the cessation of commerce. Sabbatai Zevi was then arrested by order of the Sultan, Mohammed IV, and taken before him at Adrianople. The Sultan spoke to him as follows—"I am going to test thy Messiahship. Three poisoned arrows shall be shot into thee, and if they do not kill thee, I too will believe that thou art the



Messiah." He saved himself by embracing Islamism in the presence of the Sultan, who gave him the name *Effendi*, and appointed him *Kapidgi Bashi*. Thus ended the career of the Kabbalist Sabbatai Zevi, after having ruined thousands upon thousands of Jewish families.<sup>38</sup>

1677-1684. Whether the learned Knorr Baron von Rosenroth knew of the extravagances of Sabbatai Zevi or not is difficult to say. At all events this accomplished Christian scholar believed that Simon b. Jochai was the author of the *Sohar*, that he wrote it under divine inspiration, and that it is most essential to the elucidation of the doctrines of Christianity. With this conviction he determined to master the difficulties connected with the Kabbalistic writings, in order to render the principal works of this esoteric doctrine accessible to his Christian brethren. For, although Lully, Mirandola, Reuchlin and Kircher had already done much to acquaint the Christian world with the secrets of the Kabbalah, none of these scholars had given translations of any portions of the *Sohar*.

Knorr Baron von Rosenroth, therefore put himself under the tuition of R. Meier Stern, a learned Jew, and with his assistance was enabled to publish the celebrated work entitled the *Unveiled Kabbalah* (KABBALA DENUDATA), in two large volumes, the first of which was printed at Sulzbach, 1677-78, and the second at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1684, giving a Latin translation of the Introduction to and the following portion of the *Sohar*—the *Book of Mysteries* (ספר דניעותא); the *Great Assembly* (אדרא רבא); the *Small Assembly* (אדרא זוטא); Joseph Gikatilla's *Gate of Light* (שער אורה); the *Doctrine of Metempsychosis* (הגלגולים), and the *Tree of Life* (עץ חיים), of Chajim Vital; the *Garden of Pomegranates* (פרדס רימונים), of Moses Cordovero; the *House of the Lord* (בית אלהים), and the *Gate of Heaven* (שער השמים), of

<sup>38</sup> Comp. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten*, vol. iii, p. 153, &c. Leipzig, 1859.



Abraham Herera ; the *Valley of the King* (עמק המלך), of Naphtali b. Jacob ; the *Vision of the Priest* (מראה כהן), of Issachar Beer b. Naphtali Cohen, &c., &c., with elaborate annotations, glossaries and indices. The only drawback to this gigantic work is that it is without any system, and that it mixes up in one all the earlier developments of the Kabbalah with the later productions. Still the criticism passed upon it by Buddeus, that it is a "confused and obscure work, in which the necessary and the unnecessary, the useful and the useless are mixed up and thrown together as it were into one chaos,"<sup>39</sup> is rather too severe ; and it must be remembered that if the *Kabbala Denudata* does not exhibit a regular system of this esoteric doctrine, it furnishes much material for it. Baron von Rosenroth has also collected all the passages of the New Testament which contain similar doctrines to those propounded by the Kabbalah.

1758-1763. Amongst the Jews, however, the pretensions and consequences of the Kabbalistic Pseudo-Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, and his followers, produced a new era in the criticism of the *Sohar*. Even such a scholar and thorough Kabbalist as Jacob b. Zevi of Emden, or *Jabez* (יעב"ץ), as he is called from the acrostic of his name (יעקב בן צבי), maintains in his work, which he wrote in 1758-1763, and which he entitled *The Wrapper of Books*, that with the exception of the kernel of the *Sohar* all the rest is of a late origin.<sup>40</sup> He shows that (1) The *Sohar* misquotes passages of Scripture, misunderstands the Talmud, and contains some rituals which were ordained by later Rabbinic authorities (פוסקים). (2) Mentions the crusades against the Mohammedans. (3) Uses

<sup>39</sup> Confusam et obscuram opus, in quo necessaria cum non necessariis, utilia cum inutilibus, confusa sunt, et in unam velut chaos coniecta. *Introductio in Historiam Philosophiae Hebraeorum*. Halle, 1702. Buddeus gives in this Introduction (p. 232, &c.), a detailed description of the *Kabbala Denudata*.

<sup>40</sup> The *מכתבה הספרים* of Jabez was published at Altona, 1763. A thorough critique of it is given by Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. vii, p. 494, &c.

the philosophical terminology of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew Translation of Maimonides' *More Nebuchim*, and borrows the figure of Jehudah Ha-Levi's Khosari, that "Israel is the heart in the organism of the human race, and therefore feels its sufferings more acutely" (*Khosari*, ii, 36, with *Sohar*, iii, 221 *b*, 161 *a*); and (4) Knows the Portuguese and North Spanish expression *Esnoga*.

1767. Whilst the Jews were thus shaken in their opinion about the antiquity of the *Sohar*, learned Christians both on the Continent and in England maintained that Simon b. Jochai was the author of the Bible of the Kabbalah, and quoted its sentiments in corroboration of their peculiar views. Thus Dr. Gill, the famous Hebraist and commentator, in his work on *the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language*, adduces passages from the *Sohar* to shew that the Hebrew vowel points were known A.D. 120, at which time he tells us "lived Simon ben Jochai, a disciple of R. Akiba, author of the *Zohar*."<sup>41</sup>

1830. Allen, in the account of the Kabbalah in his *Modern Judaism*, also premises the antiquity of the *Sohar*. Taking this pseudonym as the primary source of the primitive Kabbalah, Allen, like all his predecessors, mixes up the early mysticism and magic, as well as the later abuse of the Hagadic rules of interpretation, denominated *Gematria*, *Notaricon*, *Ziruph*, &c., which the Kabbalists afterwards appropriated, with the original doctrines of this theosophy.<sup>42</sup>

1843. Even the erudite Professor Franck, in his excellent work *La Kabbale* (Paris, 1843), makes no distinction between the *Book Jetzira* and the *Sohar*, but regards the esoteric doctrines of the latter as a development and continuation of the tenets propounded in the former. He moreover main-

<sup>41</sup> Comp. *A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-points and Accents*. By John Gill, D.D. London, 1767.

<sup>42</sup> *Modern Judaism*, by John Allen, p. 67-96, 2nd edition. London, 1830.



tains that the *Sohar* consists of ancient and modern fragments, that the ancient portions are the *Book of Mysteries* (ספרא דצניעותא), the *Great Assembly* or *Idra Rabba* (אדרא רבא), and the *Small Assembly* or *Idra Suta* (אדרא ווטא), and actually proceeds from the school of R. Simon b. Jochai, while several of the other parts belong to a subsequent period, but not later than the seventh century; that the fatherland of the *Sohar* is Palestine; that the fundamental principles of the Kabbalah, which were communicated by R. Simon b. Jochai to a small number of his disciples, were at first propagated orally; that they were then from the first to the seventh century gradually edited and enlarged through additions and commentaries, and that the whole of this compilation, completed in the seventh century, owing to its many attacks on the Asiatic religions, was kept secret till the thirteenth century, when it was brought to Europe. To fortify his opinions about the antiquity of the Kabbalah, Franck is obliged to palm the doctrine of the *Sephiroth* upon passages in the Talmud in a most unnatural manner. As this point, however, has been discussed in the second part of this Essay, (*vide supra*, p. 188, etc.) there is no necessity for repeating the arguments here.<sup>43</sup> Still Franck's valuable contribution to the elucidation of the *Sohar* will always be a welcome aid to the student of this difficult book.

1845. A new era in the study of the Kabbalah was created by the researches of M. H. Landauer, who died February 3rd, 1841, when scarcely thirty-three years of age. This learned Rabbi, whose premature death is an irreparable loss to literature, in spite of constitutional infirmities, which occasioned him permanent sufferings during the short period of his earthly career, devoted himself from his youth to the

<sup>43</sup> Franck's *La Kabbale* has been translated into German, with notes and corrections by the learned and indefatigable Adolph Jellinek; *Die Kabbale oder die Religions-Philosophie der Hebräer*. Leipzig, 1844.



study of Hebrew, the Mishna, the Talmud, and the rich stores of Jewish learning. He afterwards visited the universities of Munich and Tübingen, and in addition to his other researches in the department of Biblical criticism, determined to fathom the depths of the Kabbalah. It was this scholar who, after a careful study of this esoteric doctrine, for the first time distinguished between the ancient mysticism of the Gaonim period and the real Kabbalah, and shewed that "the former, as contained in the *Alphabet of R. Akiba* (אותיות דר' עקיבא), the *Dimensions of the Deity* (שיעור קומה), the *Heavenly Mansions* (היכלות), and even the *Book of Jetzira* (ספר יצירה) and similar documents, essentially differ from the later Kabbalah, inasmuch as it knows nothing about the so-called *Sephiroth* and about the speculations respecting the nature of the Deity, and that, according to the proper notions of the Kabbalah, its contents ought to be described as *Hagada* and not as Kabbalah."<sup>44</sup> As to the *Sohar*, Landauer maintains that it was written by Abraham b. Samuel Abulafia towards the end of the second half of the thirteenth century. Landauer's views on the Kabbalah and on the authorship of the *Sohar*, as Steinschneider rightly remarks, are all the more weighty and instructive because he originally started with opinions of an exactly opposite character. (*Jewish Literature*, p. 299.)

1849. D. H. Joel, Rabbi of Sheversenz, published in 1849 a very elaborate critique on Franck's *Religious Philosophy of the Sohar*, which is an exceedingly good supplement to Franck's work, though Joel's treatise is of a negative character, and endeavours to demolish Franck's theory without propounding another in its stead. Thus much, however, Joel positively states, that though the *Sohar* in its present form

<sup>44</sup> The Literary Remains of Landauer, comprising his researches on the Kabbalah, have been published in the *Literaturblatt des Orients*, vol. vi, p. 178, &c.

could not have been written by R. Simon b. Jochai, and though the author of it may not have lived before the thirteenth century, yet its fundamental doctrines to a great extent are not the invention of the author, but are derived from ancient Jewish sources, either documentary or oral.<sup>45</sup>

1851. After a lapse of seven years Jellinek fulfilled the promise which he made in the preface to his German translation of Franck's *la Kabbale ou la philosophie religieuse des Hébreux*, by publishing an Essay on the authorship of the *Sohar*. And in 1851 this industrious scholar published a historico-critical Treatise, in which he proves, almost to demonstration, that Moses b. Shem Tob de Leon is the author of the *Sohar*.<sup>46</sup> Several of his arguments are given in the second part of this Essay (*vide supra*, p. 174, &c.), in our examination of the age and authorship of the *Sohar*.

1852. Whilst busily engaged in his researches on the authorship and composition of the *Sohar*, Jellinek was at the same time extending his labours to the history of the Kabbalah generally, the results of which he communicated in two parts (Leipzig, 1852), entitled *Contributions to the History of the Kabbalah*. The first of these parts embraces (1) the study and history of the *Book Jetzira*, (2) diverse topics connected with the *Sohar*, and (3) Kabbalistic doctrines and writings prior to the *Sohar*; whilst the second part (1) continues the investigation on the Kabbalistic doctrines and writings prior to the *Sohar*, as well as (2) discusses additional points connected with the *Sohar*, and (3) gives the original text to the history of the Kabbalah.<sup>47</sup>

1853. Supplementary to the above works, Jellinek pub-

<sup>45</sup> *Die Religions-philosophie des Sohar*, Von D. H. Joel. Leipzig, 1849, p. 72, &c.

<sup>46</sup> *Moses Ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniss zum Sohar*, Von Adolph Jellinek. Leipzig, 1851.

<sup>47</sup> *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala*, Von Adolph Jellinek, first and second parts. Leipzig, 1852.



lished, twelve months afterwards, the first part of a *Selection of Kabbalistic Mysticism*, which comprises the Hebrew texts of (1) *The Treatise on the Emanations* (מסכת אצילות), (2) *The Book of Institutions* (ספר העיון), by R. Chamaï Gaon, (3) *The Rejoinder of R. Abraham b. Samuel Abulafia to R. Solomon b. Adereth*, and (4) *The Treatise* entitled *Kether Shem Tob* (כתר שם טוב), by R. Abraham of Cologne. These Treatises, which are chiefly taken from MSS. at the public Libraries in Paris and Hamburg, are preceded by learned Introductions discussing the characteristics, the age, the authorship and the sources of each document, written by the erudite editor.<sup>48</sup> May Dr. Jellinek soon fulfil his promise, and continue to edit these invaluable contributions to the Kabbalah, as well as publish his own work on the import of this esoteric doctrine.

1856. Dr. Etheridge, in his *Manual on Hebrew Literature*, entitled *Jerusalem and Tiberias*, devotes seventy pages to a description of the Kabbalah. It might have been expected that this industrious writer, who draws upon Jewish sources, would give us the result of the researches of the above-named Hebraists. But Dr. Etheridge has done no such thing ;—he confuses the import of the *Book Jetzira*, the *Maase Bereshith* (מעשה בראשית) and the *Maase Merkaba* (מעשה מרכבה), with the doctrines of the Kabbalah ; and assigns both to the *Book Jetzira* and to the *Sohar* an antiquity which is contrary to all the results of modern criticism. The following extract from his work will suffice to shew the correctness of our remarks :—

“To the authenticity of the *Zohar*, as a work of the early Kabbalistic school, objections have indeed been made, but they are not of sufficient gravity to merit an extended investigation. The opinion that ascribes it as a *pseudo* fabrication to Moses de Leon in the thirteenth century, has, I imagine, but few believers among the learned in this subject in our own day. The references to Shemun ben Yochai and the Kabala in the Talmud, and abundant internal evidence found in the

<sup>48</sup> *Auswahl Kabbalistischer Mystik*, part I. Leipzig, 1853.



book itself, exhibit the strongest probability, not that Shemun himself was the author of it, but that it is the fruit and result of his personal instructions, and of the studies of his immediate disciples."<sup>49</sup>

Now the bold assertion that there are few believers among the learned of our own time in *the pseudo* fabrication of the *Sohar* by Moses de Leon in the thirteenth century, when such learned men as Zunz,<sup>50</sup> Geiger,<sup>51</sup> Sachs,<sup>52</sup> Jellinek<sup>53</sup> and a host of other most distinguished Jewish scholars, regard it almost as an established fact; as well as the statement that there are *references to the Kabbalah in the Talmud*, can only be accounted for from the fact that Dr. Etheridge has not rightly comprehended the import of the Kabbalah, and that he is entirely unacquainted with the modern researches in this department of literature.

1857. The elaborate essay on Jewish literature by the learned Steinschneider, which appeared in *Ersch and Gruber's Encyclopædia*, and which has been translated into English, contains a most thorough review of this esoteric doctrine. It is, however, to be remarked that the pages devoted to this subject give not so much an analysis of the subject, as a detailed account of its literature; and, like all the writings of this excellent scholar, are replete with most useful information.<sup>54</sup>

1858-1861. A most instructive and thorough analysis of the *Sohar* appeared in a Jewish periodical, entitled *Ben Chananja*, volumes i, ii, iii, and iv.<sup>55</sup> This analysis was

<sup>49</sup> *Jerusalem and Tiberias; Sora and Cordova*, by J. W. Etheridge, M.A., Doctor in Philosophy. London, 1856, p. 314.

<sup>50</sup> *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*. Berlin, 1831, p. 405.

<sup>51</sup> *Melo Chafnajim*. Berlin, 1840. Introduction, p. xvii.

<sup>52</sup> *Die Religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*. Berlin, 1845, p. 327.

<sup>53</sup> *Moses Ben Schem Tob de Leon*. Leipzig, 1851.

<sup>54</sup> *Jewish Literature*, from the German of M. Steinschneider. London, 1857, pp. 104-122; 249-309.

<sup>55</sup> *Versuch einer umständlichen Analyse des Sohar*, von Schuldirektor Ignatz Stern, in *Ben Chananja, Monatschrift für jüdische Theologie*, vol. iv. Szegedin, 1858-1861.

made by Ignatz Stern, who has also translated into German those portions of the *Sohar* which are called *the Book of Mysteries*, *the Great Assembly*, and *the Small Assembly*, and has written a vocabulary to the *Sohar*. The recent death of this great student in the Kabbalah is greatly to be lamented. With the exception of the analysis of the *Sohar*, all his works are in MS.; and it is to be hoped that the accomplished Leopold Löw, chief Rabbi of Szegedin, and editor of the *Ben Chananja*, who was the means of bringing the retiring Ignatz Stern into public, will publish his literary remains.

1859. As the Kabbalah has played so important a part in the mental and religious development, and in the history of the Jewish people, the modern historians of the Jews, in depicting the vicissitudes of the nation, felt it to be an essential element of their narrative, to trace the rise and progress of this esoteric doctrine. Thus the learned and amiable Dr. Jost devotes seventeen pages, in his history of the Jews, to this theosophy.<sup>56</sup>

1863. No one, however, has prosecuted with more thoroughness, learning and impartiality the doctrines, origin and development of this esoteric system than the historian Dr. Graetz. He, more than any of his predecessors since the publication of Landauer's literary remains, has in a most masterly manner carried out the principle laid down by this deceased scholar, and has distinguished between mysticism and the Kabbalah. Graetz has not only given a most lucid description of the doctrines and import of the Kabbalah in its original form, but has proved to demonstration, in a very elaborate treatise, that Moses de Leon is the author of the *Sohar*.<sup>57</sup> Whatever may be the shortcomings of this portion

<sup>56</sup> *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten*, Von Dr. J. M. Jost, vol. iii, p. 66-81. Leipzig, 1859.

<sup>57</sup> *Geschichte der Juden*, Von Dr. H. Graetz, vol. vii, pp. 73-87; 442-459; 487-507. Leipzig, 1863.

of Graetz's history, no one who studies it will fail to learn from it the true nature of this esoteric doctrine.

1863. Leopold Löw, the chief Rabbi of Szegedin, whose name has already been mentioned in connection with Ignatz Stern, published a very lengthy review of Graetz's description of the Kabbalah. Though the Rabbi laboured hard to shake Dr. Graetz's position, yet, with the exception perhaps of showing that the Kabbalah was not invented in opposition to Maimonides' system of philosophy, the learned historian's results remain unassailed. Moreover, there is a confusion of mysticism with the Kabbalah through many parts of Dr. Löw's critique.<sup>58</sup>

We are not aware that anything has appeared upon this subject since the publication of Graetz's researches on the Kabbalah and Löw's lengthy critique on these researches. Of course it is not to be supposed that we have given a *complete* history of the Literature on this theosophy; since the design of this Essay and the limits of the volume of "the Literary and Philosophical Society's Transactions," in which it appears, alike preclude such a history. This much, however, we may confidently say, that nothing has been omitted which essentially bears upon the real progress or development of this esoteric doctrine.

Several works, in which lengthy accounts of the Kabbalah are given, have been omitted, because these descriptions do not contribute anything very striking in their treatment of the Kabbalah, nor have they been the occasion of any remarkable incidents among the followers of this system.

Among the works thus omitted are Buddeus' *Introduction to the History of Hebrew Philosophy*; <sup>59</sup> Basnage's *History of the Jews*,<sup>60</sup> where a very lengthy account is given of the

<sup>58</sup> Comp. *Ben Chananja Monatschrift für jüdische Theologie*, vol. vi, pp. 725-733; 741-747; 785-791; 805-809; 821-828; 939-942. Szegedin, 1863.

<sup>59</sup> *Introductio ad Hist. Philosoph. Ebraeorum*. Halle, 1702.

<sup>60</sup> *Histoire des Juifs*, English translation, pp. 184-256. London, 1708.



Kabbalah, without any system whatever, chiefly derived from the work of Kircher ; Wolf's account of the Jewish Kabbalah, given in his elaborate Bibliographical Thesaurus of Hebrew Literature, where a very extensive catalogue is given of Kabbalistic authors ; <sup>61</sup> and Molitor's *Philosophy of History*.<sup>62</sup>

We sincerely regret to have omitted noticing Munk's description of the Kabbalah.<sup>63</sup> For, although he does not attempt to separate the gnostic from the mystical elements, which were afterwards mixed up with the original doctrines of this esoteric system, yet no one can peruse the interesting portion treating on the Kabbalah and the *Sohar* without deriving from it information not to be found elsewhere.

<sup>61</sup> *De Cabbala Judeorum*, in his *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. ii, pp. 1191-1247. Hamburg, 1728.

<sup>62</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte oder über die Tradition*, vol. iii. Münster, 1839.

<sup>63</sup> *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, p. 275, &c. Paris, 1859.















